HUMAN SECURITY AND POST-CONFLICT REINTEGRATION OF CHILD SOLDIERS:
DISARMAMENT DEMOBILISATION REINTEGRATION (DDR) PROGRAMMES IN MOZAMBIQUE AND SIERRA LEONE

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis titled **"Human Security and Post–Conflict Reintegration of Child Soldiers: Disarmament Demobilisation Reintegration (DDR) Programmes in Mozambique and Sierra Leone"** submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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CHAPTER 5

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Acknowledgements

ABBREVIATIONS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AFP	Agence France-Presse
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AI	Amnesty International
AMOSAPU	Associação Moçambicana de Saúde Pública
APC	All People's Congress
ARC	Action for the Rights of Children
AU	African Union
BRN-C	National Revolution Front-Coordinate
BUNADER	Bureau National de Mobilisation et Reinsertion
CAAFG	Children associated with Armed Forces and Groups
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCP	Commission for the Consolidation of Peace
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CEDC	Children in Especially Difficult Circumstance
CONYOPA	Concerned Youths for Peace
CPLP	Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa
CRP	Community Reintegration Programme
CSC	Child Soldiers Coalition
CSS	Critical Security Studies
CWP	Children and War Project
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

DDRP	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAFN	Armed Forces of the New Forces
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front
GOSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GPA	General Peace Agreement
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IDDRS	Integrated DDR Standards
IFI	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MNC	Multi National Corporation
MONUC	UN Mission to the DRC
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NCDDR	National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NRA	National Revenue Authority
ONUCA	United Nations Observer Group in Central America
ONUMOZ	UN Operation in Mozambique
PRIDE	Post-Conflict Reintegration Initiative for Development & Empowerment
RENAMO	Mozambique National Resistance
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
RUF-P	RUF Party
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SCSL	Special Court for Sierra Leone
SIDDR	Stockholm Initiative for DDR
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLANGO	Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
SLANSA	Sierra Leone Action Network for Small Arms
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNSC	UN Security Council
WB	World Bank
ZANLA	Zimbabwe National Liberation Army

Chapter 1

Introduction

Child soldiers are not new phenomenon. However, the enormity of the problem in contemporary times is unparalleled, both in the numbers of young people involved and the extent and magnitude of this practice. Almost all continents (Africa, Asia, North America, Latin America and Europe) have experienced the use of children (girls and boys) in combat. Both the government forces and armed groups in a number of conflict zones have recruited or continue to recruit child soldiers. Proliferation and accessibility of small arms has sunk this gruesome phenomenon into incomprehensible depths. In several regions, poverty, lack of educational opportunities, rampant unemployment and armed violence have driven children and youth to take up arms.

During armed conflict that devours hundreds or thousands of people or renders them homeless and displaced, children are among the worst affected. Besides the physical hazards, children are likely to experience lasting psychosocial damage. In conflict zones, children often get trapped into the culture of guns and drugs, some eventually ending up as child (below eighteen) combatants. Jimmie Briggs remarks, 'there's a popular saying among journalists that the first casualty of war is the truth. I disagree. It's always the children' (Briggs 2005: XIII). In the aftermath of armed conflict, former child soldiers find it extremely difficult to reintegrate into civilian life which is likely to have severe repercussions on the former and the society. This chapter introduces the issue of child soldiers through the spectrum of human security and discusses its relevance in International Relations (IR) theory. It further traces the extent and magnitude of this phenomenon. While dealing with the origins of child soldiering and cultural notions of childhood, this chapter examines the International Law on child soldiers and their post-conflict reintegration and rehabilitation.

Child Soldiers and Human Security

The concept of human security was popularised in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1994 Human Development Report. The UNDP 1994 Human Development Report associates 'security with people rather than territories, with development rather than arms'. The report further outlines the threats to human security which include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security (UNDP 1994). An armed conflict exacerbates threats to human security where often large numbers of people get injured or lose their lives. Further, during conflict children and youth are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and government forces.

The end of the cold war spawned an era of civil wars or intrastate armed conflicts in various parts of the globe. Parts of Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East and Europe are experiencing ethno-political conflicts leading to high civilian casualty rates, mostly women and children. Wars often leave lasting scars within the minds of people, especially children, and with schools and basic infrastructure destroyed; children are deprived of leading a healthy and normal life. Those living in the refugee or displaced people's camps are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and recruitment in the armed groups.

As far as ex-child combatants are concerned, they spend their early life fighting and often end up with no education apart from military skills. Sometimes families and communities do not accept them, either due to the atrocities committed by them or the family or community fears violent retribution for the abuses perpetrated by these soldiers. Quite often DDR programmes have marginalised child soldiers. Child Soldiers Coalition (CSC) states, disarmament refers to 'collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone.' Demobilisation implies 'formal and controlled discharge of soldiers' from the armed force or an armed group. Reintegration is a long-term process which aims at giving former soldiers a viable alternative to their participation in conflict and helps them resume a normal life. It involves family reunification (or finding alternative care if reunification is not possible), provision of education and vocational

training, devising appropriate strategies for livelihood support and in certain cases providing psycho-social support (CSC 2008).[1]

The problem of girl soldiers is even more acute. They are vulnerable to sexual abuse more than boys and many times boy soldiers also sexually exploit girl soldiers. Often, girls do not make it into the demobilisation process. Sometimes those at the center of planning of the demobilisation programmes do not recognise the role of girls as "soldiers" as opposed to camp followers, wives or concubines. Sometimes girls are reluctant to identify themselves as combatants as they fear negative repercussions in terms of reintegration into society.

While the issue of boy soldiers has received much attention, little has been reported on the plight of girls. Initially girl soldiers were mostly invisible. Although analysts recognised that the existence of girl soldiers was a reality and in fact they constituted a significant percentage of fighting forces in a handful of countries, the established view had been that girl soldiers were found in only a minority of conflicts. In the next stage, girls were recognised as being involved in a number of armed groups, but they were repeatedly portrayed as "camp followers". These girls who engaged in support activities were not believed to be child soldiers per se. The expression child soldiers referred to boy soldiers, marginalising girl soldiers (Wessells 2006: 85). In the current phase, a new generation of research has offered a richer portrayal of girl soldiers and laid bare the intricacies and variations of this trend. It is apparent that there is a widespread use of girl soldiers and their roles in armed factions are every bit as diverse as those of boys. From 1990 to 2003, girls were involved in fighting forces in 38 countries, as part of armed forces, militias or paramilitaries or armed opposition groups (Wessells 2006: 86). Against this backdrop it is important to view armed conflicts not just from the perspective of state security but human security as well.

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[1] Child Soldiers Coalition (CSC) 2008 Online Source

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Post-Conflict Reintegration of Child Soldiers and its Relevance in International Relations (IR) Theory

In contemporary times, large numbers of children and youth have been involved in conflict. Thousands of child soldiers have been present in conflicts in Afghanistan, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), El Salvador, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and a number of other countries. Child soldier phenomenon is not just confined to a certain region; it is being witnessed world over wherever there is an ongoing armed conflict or even a low-intensity conflict or armed insurgency. Therefore, from the IR perspective it is imperative to study the repercussions of the child soldier phenomenon for the states that experience this crisis and analyse the gaps that exist in the understanding of child soldiers and international laws and policies on reintegration of former child soldiers.

Further, the study argues that human security and state security are often interlinked. Several armed conflicts are sustained through the involvement of child soldiers which often leads to spilling over of the hostilities into the neighbouring states. Further, movement of child soldiers across borders may in turn threaten state security. For instance, armed conflict in Sierra Leone (1991-2002) was linked to conflicts in the neighbouring Liberia and Ivory Coast. Porous borders between these West African states facilitated the movement of large numbers of child soldiers across these states which in turn sustained and even aggravated conflict in all these countries. Therefore, it is imperative to focus on human security to ensure security of the state.

Moreover, DDR programmes have traditionally focused on state security while neglecting human security. A large number of DDR interventions— 24 since 1992—have taken place in Africa (Hanson 2007).[2] Most DDR processes have failed to realise the goals of human security and most are insensitive to the needs of child soldiers. Michael Wessells rightly points out, 'the weakness of a one-size-fits-all approach becomes apparent' when one takes into account the distinctive needs of various groups including girls, ex-girl soldiers with babies, boys, children with disabilities, children affected by

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[2] Hanson 2007 Online Source

HIV/AIDS, as well as diverse situations children attempt to reintegrate into (Wessells 2006:156). Further, prominent gender-bias and exclusion of child soldiers from DDR programmes has contributed to human insecurity in some cases such as El Salvador (1992), Mozambique (1992) and Angola (2002).

Why Mozambique and Sierra Leone?

The study examines the demobilisation and reintegration of child soldiers through the spectrum of human security, focusing particularly on Mozambique and Sierra Leone. One of the reasons for selecting the case of Mozambique (1992) is that it is one of the earliest cases of DDR where soldiers below fifteen years of age as well as most girl soldiers were excluded from the DDR programme. The study aims to understand the impact of the exclusion of child soldiers from the adult-driven DDR process in Mozambique. The Sierra Leone case (2002) has been viewed as a model for the future DDR processes by the World Bank and the international community. In Sierra Leone, child soldiers were officially included in the DDR process, however, in practice the number of ex-boy soldiers actually demobilised was quite small. And most girl soldiers were not given much attention.

It is interesting to compare the two cases to see how far the DDR programmes have come since the early 1990s when the concept of human security was just beginning to take shape and this concept did not really hold an important place in the DDR. The reason for not selecting the most recent DDR case is that the study would not be able to analyse the impact of the DDR programme in the subsequent years. Through the cases of Mozambique and Sierra Leone, the study aims to illustrate, for successful reintegration of child soldiers it is vital to incorporate the bottom up or emancipatory approach to human security which focuses on cultural integrity, agency of child soldiers (boys and girls), and involvement and empowerment of the local people. Success of reintegration programmes depends much on the inclusion of child soldiers (girls and boys) in the DDR as well as the peace process.

Child Soldiering: Extent and Magnitude

Child Soldiers in Government Forces

About two-thirds of the states have ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and many have proscribed the recruitment of child soldiers in domestic law or regulations. As of October 2010, 139 states are party to the protocol and although another 24 states have signed but not yet ratified it. However, there appears to be a gap between the policies and their actual implementation. Some states continue to recruit and use children in combat. A number of African states have recruited children in their armed forces. In Sudan, the armed forces have used children in Darfur, while in the south of the country the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has engaged in deploying children. In 2008 Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSC) reported, in Uganda, children who either escaped, were captured or released from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) were coerced into joining the government defence forces to fight the LRA (CSC 2008).[3]

In Asia too, some states have deployed children in their forces. In 2010, Amnesty International USA reported, the Burmese armed forces and government-backed militias continued to systematically recruit, imprison and use child soldiers, 'both directly and through recruiting agents' (Amnesty International USA 2010).[4] As far as Yemen is concerned, in April 2011 Joe Stork, the deputy Middle East director of Human Rights Watch (HRW) pointed out, 'The Yemeni government has for too long placed children at grave risk by deploying child soldiers on the field of battle'(Now Lebanon 2011).[5]

Further, CSC in 2008 noted, the Karuna group, a breakaway faction of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) that was linked to government armed forces has also been responsible for recruiting children. In 2008 CSC also reported, there exist local-level civilian defence groups established to support counter-insurgency efforts. These groups are informally structured and in some cases unregulated by law. Some of

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[3] Ibid
[4] Amnesty International USA, 2010, Online Source
[5] Now Lebanon 2011, Online Source

these groups are village-level self-defence groups in Chad; self-defence teams in Peru; local defence entities in Uganda; anti-Maoist village defence groups in India; and village defence forces and civilian volunteer organisations in the Philippines. Often based in isolated regions, such groups are likely to escape scrutiny and accountability for the wrongs committed, including the use of child soldiers. Further, in the west, in mid-2005, a few British under-18s were sent to Iraq. Most were soon removed, however, in the meantime, they were exposed to the risk of fighting (CSC 2008).[6]

Recruitment by Armed Groups

In April 2011, Voice of America reported, the United Nations (UN) estimates that 3,500 boys and girls are part of Congolese militias. However, some observers claim there are many more. When children escape the armed militias, many re-join or are re-recruited by force (VOA 2011).[7] In March 2011, as the fighting escalated across Somalia since January, armed groups reportedly recruited more child soldiers, 'some even forcing teachers to enlist pupils' (IRIN Africa 2011).[8] Further, as far as India is concerned, in May 2011 it was reported, the CPI (Maoist) has recruited around '400 children in the past three months for its children's wing, Bal Sangathan'. It was further reported that they are receiving training in intelligence work and the use of explosives in the Saranda forests along the Jharkhand-Orissa border (Dixit 2011).[9]

According to CSC (2008), in places like Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic and Colombia, young people below eighteen years of age have been employed as soldiers as well as in other front-line tasks. In these regions as well as elsewhere, children have been used in various support roles ranging from cooks to porters and spies. Now and then, militant groups used children in suicide attacks in Iraq, as well as in the Occupied Palestinian Territory until late 2004. This phenomenon has also emerged in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2008, it was further reported, in places like Haiti, Kenya and Nigeria, children have been engaged in criminal groups whose services

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[6] Ibid
[7] Voice of America 2011, Online Source
[8] IRIN Africa 2011, Online Source
[9] Online Source

are sporadically employed by politicians as well as other actors for political ends. There were also reports of girls being raped and subjected to other forms of sexual violence and abuse by groups such as the Armed Forces of the New Forces (FAFN) in Côte d'Ivoire, the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) of Columbia, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda, and various armed factions in the DRC. Mostly, armed groups have breached commitments and flouted international law. In 2008, it was reported that despite its repeated commitments, the LTTE had been persistent in recruiting children, although in less numbers than before (CSC 2008).[10]

In 2008, CSC also reported, other groups fighting in obscure conflicts have largely got away from international scrutiny and action. For instance, in Thailand, the separatist group National Revolution Front-Coordinate (BRN-C), guilty of much of the rising violence in the southern provinces since early 2004, is reportedly recruiting child soldiers for various roles such as support and propaganda for military operations. In India, despite reports of escalating child soldier use by Maoist groups since 2005 as well as continuous reports of child recruitment by armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir and northeastern states, this issue has to date mostly escaped international or national scrutiny (CSC 2008).[11]

Historicising Child Soldiering

When did the practice of child soldiering begin? First, to answer this question it is imperative to define a child soldier. According to International Law as is explicit in the Cape Town Principles-

> 'Child soldier' is any person under eighteen years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms (Cape Town Principles 1997).[12]

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[10] Ibid
[11] Ibid
[12] Cape Town Principles 1997 in UNICEF 1997, Online Source

Despite different notions of childhood in diverse cultures, this chapter will consider those below eighteen years of age as children. The precise origins of child soldiering are not known, the issue remains cloaked in obscurity even though some accounts have made attempts to trace the beginnings of this phenomenon. In fact, these efforts by various authors have led to the emergence of disparate views on the origins of this practice. However, it has been widely argued that throughout history, in various cultures and societies, children and youth participated in military campaigns. There is a large body of literature which suggests that young people were actively involved in warfare in the past. But the question of the degree and nature of their participation in combat in the past is debatable.

In the cultures of the Mediterranean basin, it is said that it was customary for young people to serve as aides, armour bearers, and charioteers to adult combatants. Several accounts suggest that instances of this practice can be traced in the Bible - David's service to King Saul, and also in Greek mythology - the story of Hercules and Hylas. In Medieval Europe, Afua Twum Danso points out, children were not just economic actors, taking up 'apprenticeships at the age of twelve or younger'; they were active political agents too, often initiating uprisings and resistance (Twum-Danso 2004: 14). He argues, the Children's Crusade, which began in the spring of 1212 near Cologne, was a peaceful movement of the poor, mostly farm workers and shepherds and was initiated by a twelve year old boy called Nicholas. He led a crowd of approximately 20,000 children and adults over 700 miles across the Alps to Italy. In France too, began a similar movement under the leadership of a twelve year old boy named Stephen, who ushered a crowd of 30,000 into Paris (Twum-Danso 2004).

Further, David Rosen points out, in Western Europe and the United States, till recently, the armies were filled with "boy soldiers". Beginning in the Middle Ages, boy soldiers were routinely recruited into the British military, and by the late nineteenth century, the recruitment of young people became organised and systematic through the efforts of various institutions that emerged during this period. The Royal Hibernium Military School in Great Britain was founded in the year 1765 for the children of so-

called rank-and-file soldiers. It began as an orphanage for working class and poor boys, but soon, it established links with the military. Further, twelve and thirteen year olds who were among the earliest recruits served under General Thomas Gage in 1774 to crush the American Revolution (Rosen 2005:4). Rosen argues, a wide variety of data also indicate the presence of young people on the American side of the Revolutionary war. In the west, most military service until the twentieth century was voluntary, but even with the emergence of conscription the recruitment of children as soldiers continued as schools and military apprenticeship programmes continued to channel boys into the military (Rosen 2005).

As far as preindustrial societies are concerned, there is no particular, fixed sequential age at which young people join in the actions, rituals, and dramas of war, argues Rosen (Rosen 2005: 4). He points out, anthropologists have frequently cited cases of children at war in these societies. Francis Deng reports, traditionally among the *Dinka* of Sudan boys were initiated into adulthood between the ages of sixteen and eighteen and they immediately received spears that symbolised the military function of youth. Sometimes in many societies of East Africa like the *Maasai* and the *Samburu,* young boys of varying chronological ages were collectively inducted into the status of warriors. Further, the female warriors of Dahomey were recruited between the ages of nine and fifteen. Even in Latin America, among the *Yanomamo* of Venezuela and Brazil, 'where warfare was especially valorised', young people usually 'set their own pace in determining' when they wanted to assume the role of warrior (Rosen 2005: 4).

Among the Native Americans of the plains, like the nineteenth century Cheyenne, boys entered their first war parties when they were around fourteen or fifteen years of age gradually evolving into seasoned warriors. Further, Kenneth Little's ethnography, '*The Mende of Sierra Leone*' shows that children were regularly used in the nineteenth century warfare in Sierra Leone. The *Mende*, one of the most important ethnic groups in Sierra Leone, used a predatory style of warfare-designed for plunder and slave taking rather than for territorial expansion (Rosen 2005:63-64). Captive females and young children who worked as slaves were important in the expansion of the rice economy. Rosen

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argues, although Little does not provide specific information about chronological age, it is clear that those men and boys who were physically able to fight became part of the *Mende* fighting forces. At puberty when *Mende* boys were initiated into the *Mende* male secret association, the Poro; they made transition into manhood as well as warrior status simultaneously (Rosen 2005).

From Poro initiations they emerged as warriors. The youngest recruits who were known as "war sparrows" served as bearers but also participated in the fighting when called on. The youngest warriors of the *Mende* fighting forces were in their early teenage years. Such young people who are today viewed as boys or children in the west were regarded as young adults by the *Mende*. The organisation of nineteenth century *Mende* warfare was typical throughout much of the forested area of Sierra Leone. Similar patterns were prevalent among the *Kono* and other *Mende* neighbours (Rosen 2005:64). Women did not participate in direct combat since they were reduced to slaves and adult male captives were executed. Primarily males (young boys and adults) served as combatants. Rosen argues, in Sierra Leone, although the contemporary use of child combatants is not simply an outcrop of nineteenth century combat into the current period, the historic linkage between warfare and human exploitation illustrates that the participation of children in conflict is not merely a modern-day abhorrence (Rosen 2005:64).

However, some argue that in pre-colonial African societies it appears that employing child soldiers was not a common practice. The child passed through various stages in status 'during his growth and adolescence, marked by solemn rites', and did not attain the position of a full fledged 'warrior' until he was well past childhood. For instance, with his throwing stick and a heavy spear the Masai warrior was definitely not a child. In Mozambique, elders who recollect the tales of their fathers and grandfathers seem to have no memory of children participating in battle during the anti-colonial wars that occurred 'around the turn of the century and afterwards' – nor did the practice of organised child violence exist. However, today the situation is quite different; at least as

far as the guerilla movements are concerned. According to Macpherson, there is an increasing militarisation of children across the globe (Furley 1995:29).

During the later part of the nineteenth century, at the time of the American Civil War a number of young people have been said to participate in the war. Several accounts claim that young people were in fact present in all aspects of the war which included fighting on the battlefield. Rosen states, young people followed their brothers and fathers into war and some even lied about their age. They mostly had support roles but soon began participating in combat activities. And when required, they also made use of weapons that were cut down and adapted for use by children and youth. Their motives for enlisting in combat were varied. Some wanted to get rid of their abusive family life, while some desired to escape the monotony of the farm life. Then there were those young Northerners who hoped to annihilate slavery from their country. And some young confederates wanted to repel northern invaders from their soil (Rosen 2005).

Some commentators have called the American Civil War a 'war of boy soldiers'. However, the real figure of participation of boy soldiers in this war is uncertain. Those who claim that the civil war could have been called "the boy's war" have estimated that out of a total of 2.7 million soldiers more than a million were eighteen or under; about eight hundred thousand were seventeen or under, two hundred thousand were sixteen or under; about one hundred thousand were fifteen or under; 300 were thirteen or under. However, according to more careful historical analysis, between 250,000 and 420,000 boy soldiers, including many in their early teens and even younger, served in the Union and Confederate armies. On the whole, between ten and twenty percent of recruits were underage (Rosen 2005:5). Rosen argues, applying modern humanitarian terminology, the war to end slavery was in large part fought by child soldiers in numbers ever greater than those found in contemporary wars (Rosen 2005).

Further, as far as the participation of young boys in the American Civil War is concerned, another aspect which deserves attention is how the involvement of these young people was viewed and understood during that time. In the aftermath of the civil

war, accounts of young soldiers suggest that the participation of these young boys in the civil war was glorified and their nobility and sacrifice celebrated. In the North, wartime funeral sermons at the burial of those killed invariably praised the sacrifice of "Christian boy-soldiers" on behalf of abolition and the preservation of the Union. In the South, the nobility of the boy soldier was tied to the ideology of the "lost cause" (Rosen 2005:6).

Susan Shepler points out, child soldiering is hardly a new phenomenon. In Africa, for generations young men have armed themselves alongside their fathers to protect their villages, just as they herded cattle or tended fields in peacetime. Recruiting children was a common practice in Europe as well. Emmy Werner, in her study of child participants during the US civil war, points out: Historians estimate that between 250, 000 and 420, 000 boy soldiers, several in their early teens or still younger, participated in the armed forces of the Confederacy and the Union between 1861 and 1865. Their experience in battle, viewed from their standpoint, bears a remarkable likeness to the eyewitness accounts of contemporary child combatants in Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, Middle East and Central America. Shepler continues, the phenomenon of child soldiers is far from new, however, there appears to have been an escalation of the problem throughout the 1990s (Shepler 2003: 57-58).

In the beginning of the twentieth century, during World War I, despite official age restrictions on recruitment, young boys reportedly continued to enlist. Several accounts claim that in 1914, large number of British teenage boys below the minimum age of eighteen (or nineteen for service overseas) enlisted with the assistance of recruiting sergeants, who collected a bonus for each person they conscripted. Private James Martin, whose story is memorialised in the book *Soldier Boy*, by Anthony Hill, was the youngest Australian to die in World War I. He enlisted in Melbourne in 1915 at age fourteen and died a few months later near Gallipoli. Albert Cohen of Memphis, who enlisted at age thirteen and died at age fifteen, is reported to be the youngest U.S. soldier to see combat in World War I (Rosen 2005:8).

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Further, for a long time, Palestinian children and youth have served in the armed groups fighting against the Jewish presence in Palestine. The militarisation of Palestinian children and youth began at the end of the World War I, when the Balfour Declaration opened the door to increased Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. Since the beginning of the conflict, the conviction that the young people have a duty to sacrifice themselves for the Palestinian cause has held a central place in militant forms of Palestinian political consciousness (Rosen 2005).

During the World War II which began in 1939, Nazis unleashed terror among the Jewish population of Europe which led to the massacre of around six million Jews. As a result of the Nazi policy towards Jews, several armed organisations were formed. For instance, groups of Jewish partisans or "ghetto fighters" emerged in the cities of Eastern Europe, and individuals and groups of Jews throughout Europe fled into forests and rural areas where they either formed or joined partisan forces. According to a study of a thousand Jewish soldiers of the Lithuanian division of partisans more than one-third of the division's Jewish soldiers were fifteen to twenty years old (Rosen 2005: 20-21).

P.W. Singer points out, children have been present in armies in a number of cases in the past, for instance, young pages armed the knights of the middle ages and drummer boys marched before Napoleonic armies, child combatants also participated in the American Civil War [most notably when a unit of 247 Virginia Military Institute Cadets fought with the Confederate Army in the battle of New Market (1864)] and underage Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth) fought in the World War II. However, Singer goes on to argue, these were the exceptions to the general rule of warfare where children had no place in combat. But today, he asserts, the traditional rules of warfare no longer hold, and child soldiering is the growing feature of war (Singer 2006).[13]

In 1993, a resolution was adopted by the General Assembly which recommended that the Secretary-General appoint an independent expert to study the impact of armed conflict on children (Buck 2005:74). Graca Machel, former first lady of Mozambique,

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[13] Online Source

was chosen by the UN to conduct the first study on children and conflict. The Machel Report as it is called was approved in November 1996 by the General Assembly. This report makes a distinction between rule-bound traditional warfare, 'including national liberation struggles, and the patterns of warfare' seen in post-colonial states (Machel Report 1996).[14] It states that modern wars involve the "abandonment of all standards" and have a special "sense of dislocation and chaos". Machel asserts that the "callousness of modern warfare" has resulted from the breakdown of traditional societies engendered by globalisation and social revolutions. The report states the breakdown in the rules and standards of warfare has led to human rights violations against women and children, including the recruitment of children into armed forces and groups. It further points out, particularly in Africa, the "strong martial cultures" no longer have rules that prohibit attacks on women and children (Machel Report 1996).[15]

Graca Machel herself states in the report:

> War today just simply does not match the traditional conception of two opposed armies; or even of an internal conflict pitting an armed opposition force against the established government, in which each side generally abides by the 'rules of the game', respecting the basic inviolability of civilian non-combatants and the special protection due to the young (Machel Report 1996).[16]

Mary Kaldor argues that while distinguishing between old wars and new wars, it is beyond doubt that the consequences of the end of the Cold War which include the accessibility of surplus weapons, the discrediting of socialist ideologies, the breakup of totalitarian empires, and the withdrawal of superpower support to client regimes contributed significantly to the new wars (Kaldor 1999:3-4). She continues, the new wars can be distinguished from previous wars in terms of their objectives, the methods of warfare and the means of their financial sustainance. The goals of the new wars concern identity politics as opposed to the geo-political or ideological goals of previous wars (Kaldor 1999:6).

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[14] Graca Machel Report 1996 Online Source
[15] Ibid
[16] Ibid

On the whole it may be argued that it was in 1986 that child soldiers caught international attention, when the National Resistance Army arrived in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, with children as young as four among their ranks (Verhey 2002).[17] Regardless of the debate on the degree and extent of child participation in combat in the past, most commentators on the child soldier crisis agree that child soldiering is not a new phenomenon and for many centuries, children and youth have been involved in combat. However, it is important to note that the end of the Cold War has ushered in a new era where wars are no longer fought on defined battlefields between soldiers in government armed forces. It is often argued that the Post-Cold War period is characterised increasingly by internal conflicts devoid of laws and the rules of war. Further, poverty, proliferation of small, lightweight and cheap weapons, and the changing nature of warfare have led to the intensification of the child soldier phenomenon.

Cultural Construction of Childhood versus the Universal Law on Child Soldiers

This segment examines the International Law on child soldiers, while attempting to shed light on the concept of childhood in various cultures since it is germane to the question of who is a child soldier.

Defining Childhood

Among the most difficult tasks in dealing with the phenomenon of child soldiering is to first define a child or advance a universal definition of childhood transcending all cultural, social and geographical boundaries. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), a universal legal device, defines a child as every person who is below eighteen years of age 'unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority' is reached earlier (UNCRC 1989).[18]

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[17] Online Source
[18] UNCRC 1989, Online Source

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Proponents of cultural relativism have raised criticism against the UNCRC by arguing that childhood is a relative concept that changes according to local culture, historical time, socio-economic conditions, and geographical environment. De Waal emphasises the western roots of this definition: the concept of a particular (gender neutral) age of legal maturity illustrates the western juridical practice and notions of citizenship constructed 'around the universal franchise and eligibility for conscription into the army' (Twum-Danso 2004:11). Twum-Danso points out, on the question of age one commentator remarked, pointless to say that the idea that someone by a magic wand 'on the stroke of a pen' becomes a fully competent wise, mature, and autonomous person upon reaching 'a certain arbitrary fixed age has no scientific empirical basis in fact and reality' (Twum-Danso 2004: 11).

For a long time, development has been the key concept in the dominant framework surrounding the study of children and childhood and the themes which predominate in relation to it are 'rationality', 'naturalness', and 'universality'. These have formed a mode of thought which extends far beyond the disciplinary confines of psychology, influencing not just sociological approaches to the study of child but the socio-political substance of childhood itself (James and Prout 2006:10). The notion of development closely links the biological facts of immaturity, such as dependence, to the social aspects of childhood. Until the late 1970s, the universality of social practices surrounding childhood was regarded as relatively unproblematic (James and Prout 2006: 10).

Resting on the 'assumed naturalness of childhood' there was indeed little theoretical scope within which to search alternatives. This developmental approach to childhood, offered by psychology, is based on the notion of natural growth. It is 'a self sustaining model' whose attributes can be coarsely delineated as follows: rationality is the universal mark of adulthood while childhood represents the phase of apprenticement for its development. Thus, it is important to study childhood as a pre-social period of difference, a biologically determined phase on the course to full human status, that is, adulthood. 'The naturalness of children both governs and is governed by their

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universality' (Prout and James 2006:10). It is basically an evolutionary model: wherein the child growing into an adult signifies an evolution from simplicity to intricacy of thought, and 'from irrational to rational behaviour'. 'As an explanatory frame, it takes its inspiration' from an earlier epoch, from the emergence of a 'scientific interest in society' (Prout and James 2006:10).

Within the framework of this evolutionary model, Jean Piaget's work on child development is of much significance. In Piaget's theory, child development has a specific structure that consists of a series of predetermined stages, leading towards the ultimate achievement of logical competence i.e. from the immaturity of a child towards adult rationality. Within such a theoretical design children are marginalised persons 'waiting temporal passage, through the acquisition of cognitive skill', into the social landscape of adults (James and Prout 2006:11).

A number of other accounts of childhood have been inspired by Piaget's work on child development. For instance, his theory of developmental stages in cognition has had much influence on contemporary western orthodoxies about child-rearing practices. Further, Walkerdine points out, it is in fact central to current educational thinking and practice. In western societies, this perspective is embedded into the everyday understanding of children to such an extent that it is almost impossible to think outside of it (James and Prout 2006:12).

Dominant Framework of Childhood: A Critique

During the 1970's, changes in the general intellectual climate gave way to new directions in the study and understanding of childhood within several disciplines. A number of attempts have been made to address the issues concerning the inadequacy of the dominant frameworks for the study of childhood within the framework of history and social sciences. Richards (1974) and Richards and Light (1986) offered a critique of psychological accounts of child development; Mackay (1973) and Denzin (1977) came up with an alternative approach to traditional concepts of socialisation (James and Prout 2006).

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Prior to the 1970s, Philippe Aries (1962) had begun a new historical debate concerning 'the invention of childhood'. Though Aries was not the first historian to propose a radical critique of concepts of childhood, his work had a strong influence on the social sciences. His dramatic and radical contention that the concept of childhood was not present in medieval society was accepted by sociologists. It quickly became integrated as an illustration of the 'variability of human societies', especially useful because it focused not on the 'primitive' or 'exotic' but on a familiar western European past (James and Prout 2006:16).

Aries points out, it was only between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries that the notion of childhood emerged in Europe. He argues, beyond the dependent period of infancy, children were hardly depicted. They were viewed only as miniature adults. 'However, from the fifteenth century onwards children began to appear as children, reflecting their gradual removal from the everyday life of adult society' (James and Prout 2006:16). According to Aries, this was first fostered through the rise of new attitudes of 'coddling' towards children, which emphasised their special nature and needs. Second was the emergence of formal education and long periods of schooling as a prerequisite for children before they took up adult responsibilities. In the beginning only economically and practically possible for the upper classes, who alone had the time and money for 'childhood', these developments soon diffused downwards through society resulting in the institutionalisation of childhood for all. Aries's study stimulated much historical work regarding the concept of childhood. Some of it rejected his idea of 'the discovery of childhood' while other accepted and endorsed his work (James and Prout 2006:17).

John Holt argues, institutions such as childhood, motherhood, home, family, as we know them, are essentially recent and local inventions, and 'not some universal part of the human condition'. In the Dialectics of Sex, Shulamith Firestone notes:

> After the fourteenth century, with the development of the bourgeoisie and empirical science, this situation slowly began to evolve. The concept of childhood developed as an adjunct to the modern family......'childrenese'

became fashionable during the seventeeth century....In the late seventeenth century we find the introduction of special children's games...childhood did not apply to women. The female child went from swaddling clothes right into adult female dress. She did not go to school which, as we shall see, was the institution that structured child-hood. At the age of nine or ten she acted, literally, like a 'little lady'; her activity did not differ from that of adult women. As soon as she reached puberty, as early as ten or twelve, she was married off to a much older male (Holt 1974: 12).

Twum-Danso writes about the emergence of new ideas about childhood. He argues, from the seventeenth century, new notions regarding childhood began to take shape in western society, initially among the middle classes. The changes that occurred can be credited to Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Locke. The former has been particularly credited with pioneering the idea of 'the innocence of childhood on which the modern western concept is based'. In this new ideology, 'childhood' has its place in the order of human life, therefore, 'the man must be considered in the man, and the child in the child' (Twum-Danso 2004: 15).

Slowly childhood and adulthood were treated as distinct stages and former with special qualities requiring special protection. These ideas further spread to the working classes and in the nineteenth century, special legislation was introduced which was central to the 'determined efforts made to provide such a childhood' to all, even if this implied 'squeezing them into the mould' (Twum-Danso 2004: 15). For instance, the British 1870 Education Act made provision for compulsory education for all who could not afford it. In ten years' time, most children below the age of thirteen were attending school. In Britain, laws were passed which banned children from public houses and forbade them from gambling. This new imposed concept of childhood led to unease among the children themselves. For instance, the 'infantalisation' of the school environment sparked riots in British public schools in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including Eton, Rugby, and Winchester. Some thinkers view these developments as negative as they underestimated children or young people, making them dependent on adults and treating them as weak and vulnerable beings in need of protection (Twum-Danso 2004).

However, these new ideas soon extended to all classes in North America as well as Europe and gradually diffusing to the rest of the world through colonialism and globalisation, they were finally standardised in International Law. It is important to note, by traditionally representing 'the image of the dependent child and the potential victim, international law has failed' to view childhood as a historical and social construction (Honwana 2001:133). Further, it is important to acknowledge that even if common standards of childhood have been adopted by the international community and have found their way into the international treaties on child rights, in practice many non-western countries, especially African states continue to hold traditional concepts of childhood. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) which was adopted in July 1990 advances the same definition of childhood which was adopted by the CRC i.e. a child is every person who is below eighteen years of age. However, as of 2005 only twenty eight member states of the African Union had ratified the charter. Those states which had neither ratified nor signed the Charter during this time included: Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe and Sudan (Twum-Danso 2004).

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Cultural Relativism

It is important to note that the straight-18 position (a child is a person who is below eighteen years of age) is not a universal fact of culture. In various cultures, be it in the African continent, in parts of Asia or other non-western cultures, age is not determined biologically and the western concept of biological age is not useful in suggesting the termination of childhood. A person may not automatically become an adult upon attaining a certain age.

According to Sabeur Mdallel, the concept "child" varies as we move geographically from Asia to Europe or to Africa. The geographical move implies a much greater cultural move. However, it is important to note that the notions of childhood are not just cultural and social constructs, they are historical constructs as well that change

over time. For instance, Hendrik focuses on the shifting concepts of childhood in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain, from a notion of 'childhood fragmented by geography (urban/rural) and class' to one that was much more coherent and uniform (Honwana 2001:133).

In a number of African societies, childhood refers more to a social status, position or role in the society or community than to chronological or biological age. As Last points out, boys in pre-colonial northern Nigeria, became adults by getting a dependent; to be precise, by 'taking a wife', while girls attained adulthood on their ingress into motherhood (Twum-Danso 2004: 12). However, in many societies across the African continent the majority of women (along with paupers and foreigners) would always be considered minors, regardless of their age (Twum-Danso 2004). Bennett makes an interesting point regarding the difference in perception of childhood in diverse cultures and societies. He focuses on the role a certain type of economy may play in influencing the duration of childhood. He points out, where people live at the level of subsistence, capacities as well as responsibilities of adulthood start early: since 'an average life span is short and survival is a struggle', an extended 'period of dependency as a child is a luxury that families' can hardly afford (Twum-Danso 2004:13).

Despite different conceptions of childhood among diverse cultures and societies, a universal definition of childhood has been adopted by the International community. However, the age limit for recruitment of children in the military has always been the subject of intense debate and it still continues to be, either due to varied cultural notions of childhood in different societies or because of the selfish interests of both the government armed forces and armed opposition groups.

International Law on Child Soldiers: A Critique

International Humanitarian Law

At the end of World War II, a child's engagement in combat was mostly perceived or viewed as a heroic self-sacrifice. Thus, at the time when Geneva Conventions (1949) came into force, the use of child combatants as indirect or direct participants was not considered an illegal act. In fact even today some view the involvement of children in armed conflict as a public duty or a political obligation justifying it as their social or cultural tradition.

In the 1949 Geneva Conventions, children were given protection as members of the civilian population and hence, as non-participants in the armed conflict. Specific provisions were laid out to provide special treatment for children, with regard to medical care, food, relief material, and family reunification as well (Fontana1997).[19] In the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949), there are seventeen provisions relating to the protection of the civilian population which pertain to the child. The provisions differ as to which group of children it refers to, since four different age groups have been identified. These include seven, twelve, fifteen and eighteen. The eighteen years age limit refers merely to 'the death penalty provision of the Fourth Geneva Convention' (Fontana 1997).[20]

During the 1970s, Diplomatic Conference on the Development of Humanitarian Law (1974-1977) was held which led to the adoption of two Protocols additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions on international humanitarian law. This Conference acknowledged the increasing participation of children in international or non-international armed conflicts across the globe (Fontana 1997).[21] The Protocol I relates to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts and the Protocol II to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts. Under Protocol I, fighting parties in international armed conflicts are required to distinguish at all times between

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[19] Online Source
[20] Ibid
[21] Ibid

combatants and civilians so that only military is the legal target of attack. Article 77 of the Protocol I forbids conscription of children under age fifteen into the armed forces. 'It does allow, however, for persons under the age' of fifteen to participate voluntarily.

Shortcomings in International Humanitarian Law

Article 77 of Protocol I provides that:

> (2) The Parties to the conflict shall take all feasible measures in order that children who have not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities and, in particular, they shall refrain from recruiting them into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of 15 years but who have not attained the age of 18 years, the Parties to the conflict shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.

> (3) If, in exceptional cases, despite the provisions of paragraph 2, children who have not attained the age of 15 years take a direct part in hostilities and fall into the power of an adverse Party, they shall continue to benefit from the special protection accorded by this Article, whether or not they are prisoners of war (ICRC 2005).[22]

There are several loopholes in this article. Firstly, the phrase "take all feasible measures" is said to be a diplomatic compromise that permitted state party much freedom to elude the general prohibition. The expression - "take all necessary measures" – recommended by the International Committee of the Red Cross was not accepted. Another proposal put forward by the Red Cross was banning the voluntary enrolment of children, however, even this was dropped (Bennet 1998).[23]

Secondly, no minimum age limit was mentioned to define the term "children" in art 77 (2) (ICRC 2005).[24] It is said that this was a deliberate act, partly to shun the debate regarding the minimum age for recruitment and in part to accommodate the diversity of national laws on the definition of childhood. However, the omission of any definition of

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[22]International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 2005, Online Source
[23] Online Source
[24] Ibid

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childhood resulted in ambiguity that could be easily exploited by the states for their own self-interest (Bennet 1998).[25]

Finally, under the Protocol, states parties were required only to ensure that children did not take a "direct" part in hostilities. Consequently, this triggered a debate about what constituted "direct" or "indirect" participation. The term "direct" referred to some sort of active participation in hostilities alongside the regular armed forces. According to the ICRC, 'it meant a causal connection between the act of participation and its immediate result in military operations.' Therefore, "direct" participation implied any attempt to kill, harm and capture enemy soldiers or 'any attempt to damage their material and installations'. Perhaps it also included spying, sabotage, artillery spotting and conveying arms and equipment to regular troops. On the other hand, "indirect" participation perhaps referred to support activities, such as domestic activities, manufacturing munitions and gathering and transmitting information. As far as the prohibition of only direct participation is concerned, there exists considerable evidence that children who are initially recruited for support activities, often become active combatants later. Further, it may be argued, through any degree of participation – direct or indirect- children may be exposed to danger during hostilities (Bennet 1998).[26]

The Protocol II applies to those conflicts which do not come under Protocol I. It deals with non-international armed conflicts, or conflicts within the borders of a state. These are described as conflicts between state armies and organised armed groups which function 'under a responsible command structure' and exercise enough control over a part of a state's territory to allow them to perform sustained military operations (Bennet 1998).[27] Prior to the adoption of this protocol, non-international armed conflict did not come under the purview of international law except Article 3 which is common to all four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Most laws of armed conflict – including the Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 as well as other provisions of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 themselves – 'applied only in the context of international

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[25] Ibid
[26] Ibid
[27] Ibid

armed conflict' (McCormack 2006: 252). This Protocol spells out the fundamental rights of all who are not direct participants in combat, these rights include- the right to life, liberty and security of person. It also makes provision of special care and aid that is to be given to children for their normal childhood.

Protocol II lists some fundamental protections for non-combatants including the recruitment of children. Article 4(3) provides that:

> Children shall be provided with the care and aid they require, and in particular:
>
> (c) children who have not attained the age of 15 years shall neither be recruited in the armed forces or groups nor allowed to take part in hostilities;
>
> (d) the special protection provided by this Article to children who have not attained the age of 15 shall remain applicable to them if they take a direct part in hostilities despite the provisions of sub-paragraph (c) and are captured (ICRC 2005).[28]

During the drafting of this article, again there was no consensus on the age of a child soldier, a number of delegations considered age fifteen too young while others did not agree on age eighteen, thus making it impossible to "raise the age" of a child soldier to eighteen. However, it is important to note that the Protocol II went beyond the scope of all earlier treaties by prohibiting all levels of recruitment of children in armed conflict. It provided that children may not "take part in hostilities", proscribing all forms of participation, including voluntary enlistment (Bennet 1998).[29]

During this time, there was consensus that children attained a certain maturity at the age of fifteen, however there was no agreement on a specific definition of the child. Under the fourth Geneva Convention, special protection ends at the age of fifteen. Article 77 prohibits child participation in armed conflict below that age. According to Cohn and Goodwin, the text echoes the desire of governments to keep away from entering into unconditional obligations as regards the voluntary involvement of children in conflict (Fontana 1997). Article 77 refers only to direct participation and it is not quite clear

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[28]Ibid
[29] Ibid

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whether recruitment, as used in this Article also refers to forced recruitment, voluntary enlistment or both. One of the major flaws of IHL is that it does not adequately address current armed conflicts. Most conflicts today where children are deployed are internal armed conflicts. The Protocol II does not concern situations of internal strife and tensions, which involve riots, isolated and sporadic incidents of violence and other incidents of a similar nature, as not being armed conflicts. Thus, this protocol basically applies only to internal armed conflicts of an extremely high intensity. It is also important to note that there is no monitoring body in IHL to ensure the respect of humanitarian norms in times of conflict. However, some progress has been made with the Protocol II which relates to non-international armed conflicts (Fontana 1997).[30]

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

A little over a decade later, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly which is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social. Specific rights of children are enshrined in 54 articles and two Optional Protocols of the Convention. The first Optional Protocol focuses on the involvement of children in armed conflict while the second Optional Protocol deals with child exploitation (Martin 2006: 63). The Convention spells out the basic human rights of children which include: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The basic principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child (UNICEF).[31]

Article 45 focuses on promoting effective implementation of the CRC and encouraging international cooperation in the area covered by the CRC. Under this article the specialised agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other UN

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[30] Ibid
[31] UNICEF Online Source

organs are entitled to be represented at the deliberation 'by the Committee on the Rights of the Child of the implementation of the CRC's provisions which fall within their mandate' (Detrick 1999: 41-42).

Article 38 of the Convention deals with armed conflict, however as far as protection from recruitment is concerned it does not have much to offer. Although the UNCRC defines the child as a person below eighteen years of age, Article 38 holds the fifteen years age criterion for child soldiers. Article 38 provides that:

> States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of 15 years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of 15 years but who have not attained the age of 18 years, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are the oldest. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict (Fontana 1997).[32]

Article 39 relates to the rehabilitation of children that have experienced traumatic events or suffering due to armed conflicts. It is an essential correlate to Article 38 (Fontana 1997).[33]

Shortcomings in UNCRC

'Rather than retake the provisions of Protocols I and II and maintain the distinction between the types of armed conflict – Protocol I: inter-state conflicts and wars of national liberation'; Protocol II: high intensity intra-state conflict – Article 38 combines both provisions, improves upon Protocol I, 'but is less progressive than Protocol II'. It necessitates 'state action only in cases of direct participation' (Fontana 1997).[34] The main

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[32] Ibid
[33] Ibid
[34] Ibid

drawback of the UNCRC is that the non-government agencies are not bound by its obligations. Due to the absence of a derogation clause it is not quite clear which obligations a state will have to continue to observe during combat, albeit internal or international. It is also unclear as to which obligations the state will have to observe during civil strife and internal violence beneath the Article 3 threshold. The absence of a derogation clause may also result in an extensive interpretation (Fontana1997).[35]

Recently, the UNCRC has also been criticised for viewing children as 'vulnerable and in need of protection'. Brian Corby acknowledges that it is not easy to put all the principles of the UNCRC into practice across a world where there exist a range of cultures, as well as extremes of poverty and wealth. He, however, concludes that the principles adopted in the CRC do form a benchmark by which countries can assess themselves and others and can also be assessed. However, advocates of child rights have advanced ideas that stress on the strengths of children rather than their supposed weaknesses (Nurse 2007:17).

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict was adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in May 2000, and opened for signature in early June. It came into force on 12 February 2002. The protocol puts forward eighteen as the minimum age for direct participation in fighting, for enlistment into armed factions, and for conscription by governments. States may accept volunteers from the age of sixteen but are required to put down a binding declaration at the time of ratification or accession, mentioning their minimum voluntary recruitment age and drawing out certain safeguards for such recruitment (CSC 2007).[36]

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[35] Ibid
[36] Child Soldiers Coalition 2007, Online Source

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (which has been ratified by every government except the United States and Somalia) generally defines a child as any person under the age of eighteen. However, as mentioned previously, in the case of armed conflict, the convention lays down the lower age of fifteen as the minimum age for recruitment and participation in armed conflict. The new protocol helps to correct this anomaly. The objective of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict 'is to seek limits on the use of children in armed conflict and, particularly, to raise the minimum age limit for recruitment and to limit the actual participation of persons under eighteen years in hostilities' (UN 2002).[37]

Key Provisions of the Protocol:

Recruitment by States

Article 1 deals with-

☐ Participation in Hostilities: State Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces that are under the age of eighteen do not take a direct part in hostilities.

Article 2 deals with-

☐ Compulsory Recruitment: State Parties must not conscript (compulsorily recruit) any persons under the age of eighteen.
Non-State Entities

Rebel or other non-governmental armed groups are prohibited from recruiting under-18s or using them in hostilities. State Parties are required to criminalise such practices (A4 (2)) (Harvey 2000).[38]

Voluntary Recruitment

Governments must raise their minimum age for voluntary recruitment beyond the current minimum of fifteen, and must deposit a binding declaration stating the minimum age they will respect. (In practice, this means the minimum age for voluntary recruitment is sixteen).

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[37] United Nations 2002, Online Source
[38] Online Source

To ensure that combatants 'below the age of eighteen years are voluntary, the protocol requires as a minimum that':

o Such recruitment is genuinely voluntary
o Such recruitment is carried out with the informed consent of the person's parents or legal guardians
o Such persons (potential recruits) are fully informed of the duties involved in such military service, and that
o Such persons provide reliable proof of age prior to acceptance into national military service (Brett and Specht 2004:114).

All of these conditions have to be met since they are cumulative. However, it should be noted that the protocol applies only to that state which is a party to it. Brett and Specht argue, the Optional Protocol (OP) safeguards fall into two groups: those that are lucid and rather precise, "such as the requirements of proof of age and of parental or other legal consent; and those that are vaguer, or in the case of being 'genuinely voluntary', self-evidently circular" (Brett and Specht 2004:115). They continue, 'ILO standards and their application over many years are especially relevant and helpful in relation to these two, less precise criteria in the Optional Protocol' (Brett and Specht 2004:115).

A positive feature of the OP is that, as with the CRC, it will pertain to all levels of conflict. As a result the OP not just boosts 'the protection in terms of recruitment for children' but is also applicable when Protocol II fails to protect them (Harvey 2000).[39]

Shortcomings in Optional Protocol to the UNCRC

In general, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child signifies a significant improvement of existing international law on child soldiers. Yet, certain weaknesses exist in this Protocol:

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[39] Ibid

Firstly, it provides a different standard for armed groups from that of states parties. Under the Optional Protocol states parties are required to take all 'feasible measures' to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not attained the age of eighteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities, however as far as the armed groups are concerned, the Protocol states that they may not 'under any circumstances' use in hostilities, persons under the age of eighteen years.

The Protocol provision concerning all 'feasible measures' was interpreted by the United Kingdom which ratified the convention in the following manner -

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will take all feasible measures to ensure that members of its armed forces who have not attained the age of 18 years do not take a direct part in hostilities.

The United Kingdom understands that article 1 of the Optional Protocol would not exclude the deployment of members of its armed forces under the age of 18 to take a direct part in hostilities where: -

a) there is a genuine military need to deploy their unit or ship to an area in which hostilities are taking place; and

b) by reason of the nature and urgency of the situation:-

i) it is not practicable to withdraw such persons before deployment; or

ii) to do so would undermine the operational effectiveness of their ship or unit, and thereby put at risk the successful completion of the military mission and/or the safety of other personnel (UN 2000).[40]

Thus, the phrase 'feasible measures' leaves much space and can be widely interpreted as well as misused by the states parties.

Secondly, it may be argued that there is a certain double standard attached to the Optional Protocol as it prohibits recruitment of children who are below eighteen years of age but permits voluntary enlistment of under-18s. This provision can be easily misused by both the state parties and armed groups since there is often no clear line between forced and voluntary recruitment. There have been several cases when young people have volunteered to take up arms, however it is important to acknowledge that not all volunteers are truly voluntary. Or as Brett and Specht ask - how voluntary is voluntary

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[40] United Nations 2000, Online Source

recruitment? (Brett and Specht 2004). Often coercive mechanisms are used by both armed groups and armed forces to persuade young people to join up.

Thirdly, Article 1 of the Optional Protocol states that 'States Parties shall take all feasible measures to make sure that members of their armed forces who have not attained the age of eighteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities.' This provision only mentions direct participation, however indirect participation in combat or non-combatant activities may also expose children to enemy attack.

Other Laws on Children and Child Soldiers

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was adopted by the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union) in 1990 and came into force towards the end of 1999 (Packer 2002: 114). It is the only regional treaty in the world which deals with the issue of child soldiers. Under this treaty, anyone below eighteen years of age without exception is defined as a child. It states that: 'States Parties to the present Charter shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no child shall take a direct part in hostilities and refrain in particular, from recruiting any child' (Article 22.2) (CSC 2007).[41]

1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

The issue of child soldiers is also addressed in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), with more than ninety states party to the statute. The international criminal responsibility of certain child recruiters is hence established. The Rome Statute considers the following a war crime: enlisting or conscripting below-fifteens into the national armies or making them participate actively in fighting for international armed conflicts and enlisting or conscripting below-fifteens into armed forces or groups or making them participate actively in fighting for non-international armed conflicts (Vandewiele 2006: 9-10).

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[41] Ibid

The ICC was founded in 2002 as a permanent tribunal to prosecute crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. 'As of December 2000, 123 states had approved the statute, and 27 had ratified it' (Levinson 2002:1703). Some countries, including the United States, Russia, China and India are opposed to the ICC and have expressed concern about weak procedural safeguards, politically-motivated prosecutions and interference with state sovereignty. In January 2007, the ICC initiated its first trial, charging former Congolese rebel Thomas Lubanga of using child combatants. Joe Becker notes, the prosecution of Lubanga, and other recent and pending cases, are beginning to erode the longstanding notion that there will be no punishment for sending children into combat. In 2007, the Special Court for Sierra Leone convicted four individuals for recruiting child soldiers. The International Criminal Court has also charged other commanders from the DRC and Uganda. This includes Joseph Kony, the leader of the infamous Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). LRA has been known to have abducted more than 25,000 children as soldiers in Northern Uganda during the last 20 years (Becker 2009).[42]

Security Council Resolutions

Security Council resolutions have also demonstrated that the UN is actively involved in the issue of child soldiering (Takemura 2009:54). In August 1999, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1261 which strongly condemned the abduction and recruitment of children in armed conflict. It, however, incorporates the principles of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, according to which 'conscripting or enlisting children under the age of fifteen into the national armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities' is considered a war crime, thus prohibiting only those who are below fifteen years of age. In 2000, the Security Council went a step further in Resoultion 1314 'by establishing more targeted, action-oriented building blocks to protect children during and after conflict'. In addition to urging all states to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the CRC, resolution 1314 further calls for the demobilisation and reintegration of child soldiers. It also advocates efforts to meet the special needs of former child soldiers (Ensalaco and Geske 2005: 117). The Security

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[42] Online Source

Council has subsequently passed similar resolutions (Takemura 2008: 54). These are resolutions 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005) (CSC 2007).[43]

1999 Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour

Further, under the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, No. 182, adopted in 1999, forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, is considered one of the worst forms of child labour. 'The Convention calls interalia for the urgent elimination of forced recruitment of children in armed conflicts' (Brett and Specht 2004: XIII).

2007 Paris Principles

In February 2007, a conference in Paris was held which focused on the plight of child soldiers. Fifty eight head of states present at the conference committed themselves to ending the practice of recruiting child combatants. The United Nations children's agency UNICEF, which sponsored the Paris meeting, estimates that more than 250,000 children were recruited or used by armed forces in 2006 (Reuters 2007).[44] The meeting was the result of an 18-month process to appraise the 'Cape Town Principles and Best Practice on the prevention of recruitment of children into the armed forces and on demobilisation and social reintegration of child soldiers in Africa', adopted by non-governmental organisations at a conference in Cape Town in 1997 (CSC 2007).[45] The Paris Commitments complement the International Criminal Court, UN bodies and other political and legal mechanisms which are working towards preventing exploitation of and violence against children.

PARIS PRINCIPLES 2007

- o   States should tackle reasons why children join armed groups
- o   No amnesty for those who commit crimes against children
- o   Child soldiers who commit crimes are victims not criminals
- o   Countries must strive to prevent, protect and reintegrate children

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[43] Child Soldier Coalition Online Source
[44] Online Source
[45] Child Soldier Coalition Online Source

o   The needs of girl soldiers must be addressed
o   Efforts must be made to reunite scattered families

Amongst the 58 countries that signed the "Paris Principles" were ten of the twelve states where the UN discovered child soldiers often being recruited on a "massive scale". Among the countries that signed the document were a number of African states with a high number of child combatants, including Angola, Chad, the DRC, Sudan and Uganda. However, this document unfortunately carries just moral and symbolic rather than judicial weight (Reuters 2007).[46]

It may be pointed out, as Claire Breen argues, international humanitarian law and international human rights law include 'fluctuating definitions of childhood and adulthood', leading to conflicting 'standards of rights protection afforded by childhood'. The deviation between childhood and adulthood, and the associated level of protection, is most evident in the existence of the child soldier, since it has caused and continues to cause various problems, including drafting and enforcement. These difficulties are contradictory because age is a crucial factor in the implementation of the rights of children (Breen 2007: 71).

Considering the evident weaknesses in the existing international law on child soldiers, it is vital to strengthen it so that this horrific phenomenon can be effectively dealt with. It is important to acknowledge that these international laws do not hold much importance in many remote areas or deep interiors of the world, where people are not cognizant of them or where these laws are neither understood nor implemented. Therefore, the first step towards countering this phenomenon is to disseminate information and knowledge about the international law at the national as well as the local level. The next step is to reconcile international laws with local understandings.

As Honwana puts it, international conventions must be understood within the framework of 'local world views and meaning systems'. This will let them be recognised, accepted as well as implemented at the local level, 'where protection of children from

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[46] Online Source

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armed conflicts' is absolutely needed (Honwana 2001:140). Thus, it is imperative to consider local and cultural norms about notions of childhood and child protection when dealing with young people who are or were engaged in hostilities. The interaction and reconciliation between the global and the local levels is likely to produce adequate strategies which in turn will engender an environment appropriate for the effective protection of young people against the atrocities of armed conflict.

Chapter 2

Human Security and Post-Conflict Reintegration of Child Soldiers

Sustainable peace and effective post-conflict reintegration of former child soldiers is possible only if DDR and post-conflict reintegration programmes adopt bottom-up approach to human security. DDR programmes have mostly given precedence to state security over human security. Even in the relatively well-designed programmes where human security approach has been incorporated, it has mostly been top-down where the voice of international community and major powers dominated the implementation of the DDR programme. This chapter traces the origins and evolution of human security while defining and debating the concept. It further analyses different approaches and strands of human security, including the gender perspective and the emancipatory approach to post-conflict reintegration of child soldiers. It also examines the indicators of successful DDR of child soldiers.

Human Security and Children and Youth in the African Continent

A number of states in Africa are reeling under economic and political crisis. Besides failing to cope with the social and economic needs of their citizens, these African states have been unsuccessful in providing good governance. This in turn offers a fertile ground for incessant conflicts and exerts pressure on young people, considering that Africa is a continent of the young and African children and youth constitute the majority of African citizens. Torild Skard referring to Africa states, escalating economic problems and poverty have added to the work load of children. Some even argue that the perception of the child has undergone a change. Children symbolised the 'supreme value of traditional society' (Skard 2003:98). Now, a large number of families consider them a springboard to survival. They are sent to work, they are exploited and 'placed'. The 'child-king' has been turned into the 'child-servant' (Skard 2003:98). Further, discontentment with the political and economic structures has also propelled young people into resorting to

violence and voicing their opinion through participation in ongoing armed conflicts in some of the African states.

By several indicators, Africa has been judged as the most insecure region in the world. According to the Failed States Index 2010, Africa consists of the seven of the world's ten most failing states [Somalia (No. 1 failed state for three years running) followed by Chad, Sudan, Zimbabwe, D.R. Congo, Central African Republic and Guinea] (Failed States Index 2010).[47] According to the Failed States Index 2007, Africa consisted of eight of the world's ten most failing states (Sudan topped the list followed by Somalia, Zimbabwe, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Guinea and the Central African Republic) (Williams 2007:1021).

In 2005, Human Security Centre claimed, most armed conflicts in the world today occur in Sub-Saharan Africa. At the turn of the 21st century more people were dying in conflicts in the Sub-Saharan region than in the rest of the world collectively. Human Security Centre in 2005 pointed out, almost every state across the wide middle expanse of the continent from Somalia to Sierra Leone, and Sudan to Angola remains enmeshed in a volatile blend of poverty, crime, ethnic discrimination, inequitable and unstable political institutions, "low state capacity and the 'bad neighbourhoods' of other crisis-ridden states" (Human Security Centre 2005: 4). According to the Failed States Index 2009, Somalia, Sudan, and Sierra Leone figure in the alert category with Somalia and Sudan finding themselves in the 1st and the 3rd place respectively (The Fund for Peace 2009).[48]

All the above mentioned factors are linked to increased risk of armed conflict. The ragbag of pervasive poverty, poor infrastructure, declining GDP per capita, weak administration, plethora of cheap weapons, external intervention as well as the impact of a major decline in per capita foreign assistance during much of the 1990s, imply that armed conflicts in these countries are hard to circumvent, control or bring to a halt.

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[47] Failed States Index 2010, Online Source
[48] The Fund for Peace 2009, Online Source

Furthermore, brutal conflict intensifies those conditions that led to it in the first place, generating a 'conflict trap' from which it is extremely difficult to escape. Consequently, sustaining peace settlements is a key task in many post conflict countries in the continent (Human Security Centre 2005:4). Further, with burgeoning child soldiers conflicts become even more intractable as a number of conflicts are sustained through the involvement of children and youth. This adversely affects the wellbeing and security of the state, its people as well as of those young people who are engaged in violent conflict. The following segment traces the genesis and evolution of human security. It examines various approaches to this concept while analysing at length the approach best suited for successful reintegration of child soldiers.

Origins of Human Security

The history of the ideas that add force to the traditional notion of human security can be said to come from US President Roosevelt, "*freedom from want*" and "*freedom from fear*" being among his four fundamental freedoms. However, it was only at the end of the Cold War and the ensuing iconoclastic perspective change in International Law that the 'dichotomy of the modern understanding of human security' – security with regard to conflicts on the one hand and, security in view of human development on the other hand – became an issue in international legal discourse. While the reports from the 1982 Palme Commission, the 1983 Brandt Commission, the 1988 Brundlandt Commission and the 1995 Commission on Global Governance formed the basis for the conceptual development of human security, it was the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report, and, later, other reports influenced by the former, that created and shaped the concept and introduced it into international fora (Kettemann 2006:42).

Non Traditional Threats and the Evolution of Human Security

The aftermath of the Cold War saw remarkable changes in the global security milieu (Human Security Centre 2005:3). The end of the Cold War has facilitated 'the burgeoning of the security agenda' to comprise a different set of dangers and threats. Most of them are not exactly new but they were previously not included in the policy

debates by the Cold War context. 'These threats are global in scope, persistent in nature, and potent in their implications' (Edgar and Ifantis 2007: 451). The non traditional threats include transnational organised crime, drug trafficking, nuclear smuggling, proliferation of small arms, environmental risks, international terrorism, refugee movements and uncontrolled and illegal immigration. The upsurge in these threats led to the emergence of the multidimensional security concept referred to as "human security" which was, as mentioned before, popularised in the UNDP 1994 Human Development Report. The UNDP states:

> The concept of security has for too long been interpreted too narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation-states than to people. ... Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolised protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards. With the dark shadows of the Cold War receding, one can now see that many conflicts are within nations rather than between nations (UNDP 1994: 22).

In the aftermath of Cold War, there was a surge in ethno national conflicts, complex humanitarian emergencies as well as genocide accompanied with colossal civilian deaths. Due to the intensification of conflict and human vulnerability the Westphalian line between the domestic and international spheres of human activity and the dominant paradigm of national security, turned fuzzy. The concept of national security with its narrow focus on state sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, was undermined as a result of the broader concept of human security (Thakur 2006:76).

The end of the Cold War gave way to a debate that had been developing for years, motivated by practitioners and scholars increasingly dissatisfied with established or traditional notions of security (Henk 2005: 92). By the late 1970s, the traditional state-centric notion of security with its focus on military force was being challenged by some scholars who argued that conventional approaches were unable to capture the reality of a growing cast of actors and agendas on the world stage which posed a range of threats to citizens and regimes. These views attracted a substantial following throughout the 1980s,

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and by the early 1990s, the new thinking had begun to capture the imagination of policy makers in several countries (Henk 2005: 92).

According to MacFarlane and Khong, the rise of human security in the twentieth century can be attributed to six factors. Firstly, the participants in armed conflict widened from a 'narrow elite to mass conscripts'. Secondly, the outcome of the industrial and scientific revolutions radically augmented the range, lethality and precision of firepower, which meant that the state had to accept increasing numbers of its own citizens 'being killed in the effort to protect them'. The ultimate paradox occurred with nuclear weapons in addition to the strategies of mutually assured destruction. Third, many regimes indulged in killing their own people in large numbers, a case in point is the Holocaust. Next, at the time of decolonisation, many states experienced a lack of capacity to assure the security of their people or exercise authority over the resources which were then taken away by predatory groups who applied the 'principle of sovereignty and the norm of non-intervention' to guard themselves from external pressure. Then, the disintegration of the Soviet empire and the end of the state-centric, militarised, and confrontational Cold War gave way to alternative conceptions of security and order. And finally, globalisation became a factor in reducing the 'salience of the state and of military threats and defences' (Thakur 2006:77-78).

Defining and Re-Defining Human Security

Alfred G Nhema notes, although the emergence of the human security concept goes back to the eighteenth century, tracing its origins in the work of Rousseau, Montesquieu and Condorcet, this notion has, together with the changing world, experienced successive transformations. In an attempt to put forward the 'exact' definition of human security that identifies the 'core' elements, a wide-range of definitions have been developed by advocates of 'different schools of thought and stakeholders' (Nhema 2006:193).

Despite the support the human security approach has received from the civil society organisations across the globe, within international community and even within the policy making circles in various countries; this notion has been criticised by some for

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not having a coherent or a consistent definition. There exist wide ranging definitions of human security. Human security has emerged as a recent concept which deals with protecting individuals from any threat. This conception that derives from liberal theory and thought is explained by the Human Security Centre (2006) in the following fashion:

> Secure states do not automatically mean secure peoples. Protecting citizens from foreign attack may be a necessary condition for the security of individuals, but it is not a sufficient one. Indeed, during the last one hundred years far more people have been killed by their own governments than by foreign armies. All proponents of human security agree that its primary goal is protection of individuals. But consensus breaks down over what threats individuals should be protected from...The UN's commission on human security argues that the threat agenda should be broadened to include hunger, disease and natural disasters because these kill far more people than war, genocide and terrorism combined (Kegley 2008: 243).

The UNDP 1994 Human Development Report which focuses on human security, 'equates security with people rather than territories, with development rather than arms. It examines both the national and the global concerns of human security'. The report further outlines the threats to human security which include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security (UNDP 1994).[49] Several thinkers have also propounded definitions of human security which stress on people but differ in emphasis. As Kanti Bajpai notes, human security is centered on 'the sanctity of the individual' (Bajpai 2000).[50] MacFarlane and Khong point out, 'human security is distinct in its focus on the human individual as the principal referent of security' (MacFarlane and Khong 2006: 2).

King and Murray leaving violence aside offer a human security indicator that gauges 'the years lived outside the state of generalised poverty' (Alkire 2003: 5). Caroline Thomas emphasises on fundamental material needs. She points out, human security may be described as a condition of existence in which basic material needs are fulfilled and human dignity, including significant participation in the community life realised. 'Such human security is indivisible' since 'it cannot be pursued for or by one

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[49] UNDP Online Source
[50] Online Source

group' at the cost of another. Human security is pursued for the greater part of humanity as a component of a collective, most frequently the household, at times the village or the community defined along other criteria such as religion or caste. Basic needs such as food, shelter, education, and health care are crucial for the continued existence of human beings. However, human security goes beyond physical survival. For the realisation of human security, emancipation from oppressive power structures whether global, national, or local in origin and scope is, absolutely essential (Thomas 1999:3).

While defining human security, Selim Jahan argues, it is imperative that the concept of human security is not likened with human development. Human development being the broader concept can be defined as the process of expanding the spectrum of people's choices. Whereas human security implies that people can exercise these choices freely and safely. Although there exists a link between the two concepts – 'they are mutually reinforcing'. Progress in one area boosts the likelihood of 'progress in the other,' however failure in one area also increases the risk of failure in the other (Jahan 2006: 268).

A significant landmark in the development of the human security concept was the Human Security Now report (2003) to the UN Commission on human security, chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen. It declared:

> The international community urgently needs a new paradigm of security....The state remains the fundamental purveyor of security. Yet it often fails to fulfill its security obligations – and at times has even become a source of threat to its own people... That is why attention must now shift from the security of the state to the security of the people to human security (Booth 2007:321).

This was not a change in priority governments were likely to pursue, even though some of them proudly incorporated the concept to their declaratory policies. Soon the Ogata-Sen report seemed to occupy a major role at the UN as well as in discussions of foreign policy in some countries such as Canada, Japan and Norway. However, these countries defined human security differently (Booth 2007: 322). In the academic world as well, the notion of human security caught attention. The academics too, like governments, redefined the concept. For instance, Caroline Thomas expanded it from the more negative

initial notion of human security (protection from) to incorporate a more positive dimension (participation in) (Booth 2007: 322).

Debating Human Security

The very basis of human security is extremely controversial and disputed, as are its definition, scope and utility (Kettemann 2006:41). Kettemann states, critique on the concept of human security focuses primarily on two aspects: an individual oriented approach that describes an increasing number of potential harms as security threats does not productively contribute to the debate on the relevant issues. Second, labeling all possible harms to the individual security threats makes it impossible to prioritise political action (Kettemann 2006:47). Barry Buzan is skeptical about human security since he believes it multiplies concepts without contributing to analytical value. It compels a reductionist understanding of international security and also reinforces a flawed propensity to 'idealise security as the desired end goal' (Buzan 2004:369). According to Buzan individuals are not isolated beings and merely acquire their meaning from the societies in which they function: 'they are not some kind of bottom line to which all else' should or can be subordinated or reduced (Kettemann 2006:47).

In Roland Paris's view, there are particularly two problems that restrict the effectiveness of the human security concept for students and practitioners of international politics. First, the concept does not have a precise definition. Human security is similar to 'sustainable development'— everybody is for it, however few people have a lucid idea of what this concept actually means. Existing definitions of human security tend to be remarkably expansive and vague, taking within their ambit everything from 'physical security to psychological well-being'. This offers little help to policymakers in the prioritisation of competing policy goals and academics little sense as to what, precisely, is to be studied (Paris 2001:88).

Second, Paris claims, the most enthusiastic supporters of human security seem to have an interest in keeping the term vague and expansive. The notion of human security is the adhesive that keeps together a muddled coalition of "middle power" states,

development agencies, and NGOs—all of which seek to divert attention and resources 'from conventional security issues and toward goals' that have, by tradition, fallen within the realm of international development. The reason why human security is a powerful unifying concept for this coalition is that it lacks precision thus encompassing the diverse perspectives and objectives of all the members of the coalition. 'Cultivated ambiguity renders human security an effective campaign slogan', it however reduces the concept's efficacy as a 'guide for academic research or policymaking' (Paris 2001:88).

Andrew Mack criticises the vagueness of a great deal of the human security literature and argues, through better understanding of the causes and correlations of human security threats, it is possible to define the concept more clearly. However, a number of authors and thinkers have offered defences of human security. For instance, Ramesh Thakur points out, it is difficult for states to counter the present day globalised threats. The national security conceptions that focus on expensive defence machineries fall short of addressing several non-violent issues of international concern. While Amitav Acharya views human security as a response to the globalisation of international policy, Fen Osler Hampson lauds this concept as an instrument to give a voice to marginalised groups (Kettemann 2006:47).

Richard A. Matthew notes, some scholars reflect skepticism towards the idea that human security can yield better insights than other approaches to the study of international development and security. The human security concept has been criticised for being remarkably expansive to be analytically useful and has lacked the instant appeal of Robert Kaplan's "coming anarchy" thesis (1994), nonetheless, its development has proved steady and has reflected much appeal for policymakers, scholars and activists in the developing world as well as Europe (Matthew 2007:163-164).

Kanti Bajpai, while defining human security as 'threats to the life and liberty of individuals and communities, balanced by capacities to deal with those threats (security = threats minus capacities)' argues that threats and capacities will differ in time and space. He claims, beyond a point, it is worthless to 'insist on a definition and conceptualisation

that is good for all societies for all time' (Bajpai 2004:360). Similarly, Kyle Grayson (2004) reflects upon conceptualising human security. He asks "who, what and where is marginalised when 'experts' " offer a "precise/scientific definition that is of practical use", and asserts that the attention should be drawn towards the power-knowledge nexus that the concept encompasses. Further, he maintains, the pathological obsession with arriving at definitional universality evades the 'ethical dimensions of politics as an enterprise concerned with the legitimacy of dominant relations of power' (Fierke 2007:149).

Further, Sarigiannidis argues, human security is currently considered 'an overarching concept and functional framework for peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace building', and even though it is contested, it reflects a paradigm shift (Sarigiannidis 2007: 523). He further notes, human security throws light on the essential freedoms, the vital needs, and the demands of individuals and societies; removes security from state-centered political jargon; and challenges foreign policymakers to shift from their 'long-standing sacrosanct focus on national interest' and tackle the deep-seated sources of conflicts (Sarigiannidis 2007: 523).

On the whole, it may argued that non traditional security threats such as poverty, rampant unemployment, trafficking in humans and drugs, armed violence, proliferation of small arms, displacement and so on, necessitate the focus of states and the international community on human security. Often state security and human security are interlinked, therefore, it is not adequate to prioritise one over the other.

Approaches to Human Security

This chapter will classify human security into mainly two categories. First is the comprehensive approach embracing all components that are normally considered fundamental for the security and welfare of people at individual as well as societal level. These components include political, social, cultural and human rights, democracy, social justice, economic development, and demographic factors, among others. The second ('narrower') category is centered on 'violent threats as core elements underlying human

security.' Other approaches use a range of parameters to demarcate or expand the concept, or to embrace or eliminate certain components (Nhema 2006:193). Some of these strands of human security which will be dealt with in this chapter include the feminist approach, the critical approach and the institutional and emancipatory approaches.

In the realm of foreign policy, Canada, Japan and Norway have been ardent supporters of the human security concept. In the policy domain, Canada and Japan (along with the UN) have been the chief international advocates of the notion of human security (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2007: 560). Canada's version of human security has focused on 'freedom from fear' which has often been described as the narrow approach while Japan's version centers on 'freedom from want' which is frequently termed as the broad approach to human security.

Freedom from Fear vs. Freedom from Want

Both Canada and Japan are engaged in advocating the idea of human security. As far as Canada is concerned, it mostly views human security from a 'perspective of violent conflict, protection and humanitarian intervention.' It is self-evident, in a considerably interconnected world, those states that put to risk the human security of their citizens threaten everyone. "This particular human security focus, in freeing defence from a traditional 'military threat' view of national interest", has been said to have salvaged Canadian foreign policy from insignificance. Canada, along with Norway, was a key mover in the thirteen-nation Human Security Network established in 1999 at foreign ministerial level. In addition, it is the prime sponsor of the ICISS (Duffield 2007:120).

It was in the mid-1990s that middle-ranking states, particularly Norway and Canada, began taking much interest in the notion of human security. In addition to their focus on state security, leaders of these states became particularly concerned with the protection of individuals and communities in the context of freedom from fear (Heinbecker 1999:6). Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy was strongly influenced by his perception that in the aftermath of the Cold War, as compared to the

interstate conflicts, intrastate conflicts had become more widespread. These conflicts set in motion an alarming trend of large numbers of refugees and displaced people. Axworthy was conscious of the significance of human security as freedom from want, however, he decided to focus Canadian efforts on the freedom from fear aspect of human security on which he believed Canada could make the greatest impact.

Human Security as freedom from fear has been pursued through two key channels:

> A rights-based approach anchored in the rule of law and treaty-based solutions; and a humanitarian conception with safety of peoples/freedom from fear as the objective behind international interventions, humanitarian relief and post-conflict peacebuilding (Thomas 2007:113).

On the other hand Japan, rather than promoting intervention per se, has been engaged in addressing human security from a 'containing or consolidating development perspective', for instance through advocacy on the various threats to human survival. These include human rights violations, poverty, environmental degradation, population displacement, international crime, drugs, and so on. Japan is the key sponsor of the independent Commission on Human Security that commenced its work in the year 2000; this body does not have any Canadian commissioner. During this time, however, Japan refused to become a part of the Human Security Network. These institutional preferences are indicative of 'the globalising/containing tendencies within human security' (Duffield 2007:120). Just as these tendencies are interrelated, however, 'institutional preferences are neither fixed nor immutable.' For instance, with the advent of incessant wars Japan has recalibrated its aid rules for the purpose of funding security-related activities (Duffield 2007:121).

Considering their divergent historical experiences and domestic politics, it is explicable that different countries have differing interpretation of human security. With its tradition of international peacekeeping, Canada's perspective of human security entails preventing physical violence against human beings. In this context, the Canadian approach may involve military intervention 'within a multilateral framework and peace

enforcement' in a country experiencing genocide and ethnic cleansing even if this may violate the traditional notion of state sovereignty (Peng 2006:146).

While Japan, considering its tradition as one of the world's major donors of foreign aid and the legacy of constitutional restrictions, suspicious neighbours, as well as residual pacifism among its people, espouses a more development-oriented and broader conception of human security. As a result of the norms of Japanese pacifism, Japan cannot adopt a more muscular approach to human security such as military intervention or peace enforcement even for humanitarian reasons against the consent of a target state. Canada and Japan have take up different approaches to human security not because this concept is essentially vague or because Canadian and Japanese bureaucrats, politicians, and scholars happen to be confused but due to 'certain objective yet differing realities' characterised by their domestic and international politics, in addition to their respective historical legacies (Peng 2006:146).

Feminist Approach

A 1994 UNDP report states:

> In no society are women secure or treated equally to men. Personal insecurity shadows them from cradle to grave...And from childhood through adulthood they are abused because of their gender (McKay 2004:153).

Feminists describe security in multilevel and multidimensional terms as the attenuation of all kinds of insecurity including physical, economic, and ideological. They stress on social relations rather than interstate relations and are concerned with uncovering 'how gender hierarchies and their intersection with race and class' aggravate women's insecurities (Thomas 1999:14). Betty Reardon notes, feminist approaches to security are concerned with overcoming and transforming threats to the peace with 'positive conditions of mutual security.' This proclivity towards mutual security for all of humanity is archetypal of 'most women's actions for peace.' These actions and views that form the basis for feminist perspectives on security are stimulated by women's work and experience (Reardon 1993:21).

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Referring to human security, Susan McKay notes, two major aspects of women's security that are frequently excluded from discussions of human security are (1) feminist critiques of the human security concept and (2) the ways women and girls experience insecurity and the conditions that should be met for their security (McKay 2004:152). With regard to human security, Simone Wisotzki points out, 'underlying gender hierarchies and their relevance for shaping societal practice must be made visible, and alternatives to overcoming insecurities have to be developed.' For instance, while building programmes and policies, examining likely effects upon both genders is imperative since the erosion of security is experienced by men and women differently. Holzner and Truong note, 'all forms of human (in)security are gendered', even if their patterns, manifestations, and 'degree of intensity may be specific and context dependent,' since social structures, practices as well as symbols in societies are gendered (McKay 2004:153).

Beth Woroniuk highlights major gendered dimensions that have been absent from human security discussions. These include:

> (1) violence against women, (2) gender inequality in control over resources, (3) gender inequality in power and decision making, (4) women's human rights, and (5) women (and men) as actors, not victims (McKay 2004:154).

In their critiques, feminist scholars insist that human security must 'privilege issues of physical, structural, and ecological violence rather than military security.' Moreover, their critiques draw attention to 'interrelationships between military, economic, and sexual violence' (McKay 2004:155-156).

Critical or Postmodernist Approach

The 'critical' or postmodernist approach to human security, as seen in the work of Ken Booth, advances a broadened conceptualisation of security that stretches beyond a military determination of threats. Proponents of the postmodernist approach emphasise that 'the state must be dislodged as the primary referent of (human) security', and in its place encompass a broad range of non-state actors. These actors include individuals,

ethnic and cultural groups, regional economic blocs, multinational corporations (MNCs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and almost all of humanity. According to Booth, human security is ultimately more important than state security (Naidoo 2001).[51] Booth observes, states and implicitly governments must no longer remain the principal referents of security since governments which are meant to be the keepers of "their peoples' security", have in fact become the main cause of insecurity for scores of people (who live under their sovereignty), rather than the armed forces of a neighbouring state. This perspective contests the notion of a state as an adequate and effective provider of security to its citizens (Naidoo 2001).[52]

Edward Newman makes a distinction between problem solving approach, which he states, dominates human security scholarship and critical approaches. Newman credits this division to Robert Cox's well-known distinction. Problem-solving approaches view existing social relationships, and the institutions into which they are structured, as the given and unavoidable framework for action. On the contrary, critical approaches do not regard established policy parameters as a given, or essentially legitimate. These approaches question the emergence and continuance of institutions. Newman argues, as far as the human security scholarship is concerned, most of it has been problem solving. This is mainly due to its 'origins in foreign policy initiatives and among scholars interested in' development and international organisations. He further notes, nevertheless, a critical approach to human security is emerging which attempts to carry out a deeper theoretical inquiry into issues of security and insecurity. Critical Human Security Studies is a much needed future course for human security (Newman 10-11).[53]

Institutional Approach and Emancipatory Approach

Oliver Richmond identifies two versions of human security- the institutional approach and the emancipatory approach. He asserts, the former considers the establishment of liberal institutions to defend human security as paramount while the latter seeks empowerment of individuals as well as the elimination of needless constrictions over

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[51] Online Source
[52] Ibid
[53] Online Source

their lives. He further argues, the institutional approach is a derivative of 'the intersection between realist and liberal thinking in IR and in policy' of late, and is particularly linked with a peace building consensus on the 'liberal peace' (though this may now be more precisely termed 'neoliberal peace') (Richmond 2007:460). 'This certainly aspires to human security in its broader forms', however, in effect focuses 'narrowly and, in positivist terms', on basic security and the creation of effective institutions of governance through which 'human security can be imported' into post-conflict development situations. This top-down approach considers human security to be contingent on security and strong states and international intervention impelled by hegemonic states that set up the necessary institutions so as to make available very basic forms of human security, primarily physical security (Richmond 2007: 460-61).

The second approach takes from the critical impulse in IR, focusing essentially on emancipation as the aim of human security. This bottom-up approach focuses on the empowerment of individuals wherein individuals are 'empowered to negotiate and develop a form of human security' that suits their political, economic, and social needs. It also provides them with the required apparatus to do so. This perspective deals with a broad conception of human security and its external providers, but at the same time aims at local agency as its final expression. Therefore, human security is focused on emancipation from hegemony, domination, oppression, and want. It is considered a universal project which is capable of being shaped by, and 'reflecting, local interests and particularities' (Richmond 2007: 461).

Richmond asserts, since human security is developed within the framework of the rule of law, democratisation, human rights, globalised markets, free trade, and neoliberal economic development, it is predominantly typified by an institutional approach. The actors usually linked with human security include foreign state donors, state donor-funded nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations (IOs), international agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs), and regional organisations, all of which portray human security as a universal set of fundamental security needs created within a liberal state. This is then taken further to reflect the right

of such "internationals" to evade state sovereignty and officialdom, and to intervene in areas usually 'reserved for domestic, sub-regional, community, or familial competency.' Therefore, the definitions, associated rights, needs as well as the limits of human security are constructed according to an external liberal consensus with the supposition that what translates into integration of military security and humanitarian provisions suits the local expectations and needs, 'while serving as a universally liberal normative regime'. Such processes are carried out by donor states and IOs. These include the UN and its agencies, the World Trade Organisation, and the World Bank, in association with civil society (Richmond 2007: 461).

Security, Peace building and Post-Conflict Reintegration

Realism and Peace building (State Security and Power)

In most peace building cases (reconstruction efforts subsequent to conflict termination) 'it is the integrity of the state' that is frequently given security. Insecurity, put differently, is 'synonymous with an attack on the integrity of the state' (Conteh-Morgan 2005: 70). Due to this one-dimensional, state-centric approach to security, many states confronted with civil strife have not been able to resolve their problems. Moreover, many peace building efforts undercut the importance of human security since people are considered the 'means' to political stability "as opposed to being the 'end' of all peace building efforts" (Conteh-Morgan 2005: 70).

It may be argued that relatively little attention has been given to the relationship between post conflict reconstruction or peace building and human security. Major Powers have mostly viewed reconstruction and reintegration efforts in the war torn regions through the spectrum of state security. Effective post conflict reintegration of former soldiers and the society depends much on human security. Although it is imperative to focus on state security while designing and subsequently implementing reintegration programmes in a post conflict state, however, if the concept of human security is not taken into account, the state is likely to relapse into conflict. This is because

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marginalisation of human security (which focuses on economic and social security of an individual) would hinder effective reintegration of former soldiers and the communities. This in turn would result in former combatants resorting to violence or joining armed gangs. In most armed conflicts, large numbers of child soldiers are used in fighting and in the aftermath of conflict most of them end up with no education or productive skills. If they are not provided with effective rehabilitation then this would offer a fertile ground for their re-recruitment in armed militias in war torn neighbouring countries or their involvement in violence in their own states. This in turn threatens both state security and human security.

Traditionally even the DDR programmes which are implemented to reintegrate former soldiers have given precedence to state security over human security. This is a major obstacle in effective post-conflict reintegration. Most of the funds are directed towards disarmament programmes. Reintegration programmes which require sufficient and continuous flow of funds for a substantial period of time have often suffered a setback due to lack of financial resources. Although DDR programmes are carried out jointly by the state government, international community, donor governments, NGOs and civil society organisations, in a number of cases, the state government of the war ravaged country does not exercise enough control or power to implement post conflict reintegration programmes. Major Powers and the international community often impose their own agendas where reintegration is usually not given much importance.

Post-conflict peace building efforts in almost all regions have always carried the element of power as the powerful states mostly aim at imposing hegemonic peace. Current peace building efforts whether in Africa, Asia, or Europe are mostly typified by a 'language of power, exclusion, or defense of an international order' that does not effectively tackle issues of 'emancipation and inappropriate impositions' (Conteh-Morgan 2005: 70). Paul D. Williams, speaking on the African continent argues, for a long time the people of Africa have been victims of a powerful but distorted version of regime security (Williams 2007:1023). Poku et al. referring to Africa observe, African region has remained obstinately tied to the traditional imperatives of power, state interests, military

force and geopolitical instability (Poku et al. 2007:1155). States should be considered a 'means to provide security for their people, not as the ends of security policies' (Williams 2007: 1023).

Liberalism and Peace building

In post-conflict states, the international community or international agencies, particularly since the 1990s have often attempted to push their agenda of democratic reforms and a market-oriented economy. In recent years, liberals or liberal institutionalists, in their rhetoric, seem to have been emphasising upon the notion of human security during post conflict reintegration of states. However, even here when the human security approach is adopted in the post conflict reintegration programmes it is mostly top-down. DDR in Sierra Leone is a good example. In my interviews with a number of NGOs and civil society organisations across the country, it came across that the reintegration programmes in Sierra Leone were mostly top-down. However, later local communities and local organisations got increasingly involved in the reintegration efforts.

Peacekeeping, peace building, and reconstruction are activities now intimately linked with liberal state-building, and in this framework 'human security has become a validating concept of the overall project's goals', although many international actors involved in non-civil-society-oriented areas would not use this expression to describe their work (Richmond 2007:459). Human security strengthens 'the liberal state in its orthodox politically liberal and economically neoliberal form' (Richmond 2007: 459). In the realm of peace building, the institutional approach to human security has been most frequently used by the powerful states to push their own agenda of free trade and economic liberalisation.

Paris views peace building as a huge experiment in social engineering that entails transplanting western models of social, political, and economic organisation into war-torn states in an attempt to control civil conflict: or put differently, pacification through economic and political liberalisation. He continues, however, this paradigm has not been particularly successful in establishing stable peace. On the contrary, the very process of

political and economic liberalisation has engendered destabilising side effects in war-torn states, obstructing the consolidation of peace and in some cases even igniting renewed hostilities. For instance, in Angola and Rwanda, political liberalisation contributed to the re-emergence of violence. In Bosnia, rather than facilitating their reconciliation, elections reinforced the severance of the parties while in Mozambique, El Salvador and Nicaragua, the impact of economic liberalisation has threatened to regenerate conflict. The liberal internationalist approach to peace building has spawned unanticipated problems. Peace building missions have had the "perverse effect" of weakening the very peace they were supposed to bolster (Paris 1997: 56).

War-torn states are normally ill-equipped to handle societal competition brought on by political and economic liberalisation, not just due to the formers' recent history of violence, but because they are usually deficient in the institutional structures capable of resolving internal disputes peacefully. In this context, attempts to convert war-torn states into market democracies can in fact aggravate rather than alleviate societal conflicts (Paris 1997:57).

Emancipatory Approach to Human Security and Peace building

It is worth pointing out that even more robust and well-designed DDR programmes have failed to focus on or advance a bottom-up approach to human security. In a war- ravaged state, sustainable peace cannot be imposed from outside. The local population, local communities, and NGOs need to be empowered to take initiatives with the help of international organisations in designing and implementing reintegration programmes that suit the local socio-economic context.

Identity and culture, knowledge, ideas, and structures 'with an interpretive bottom-up approach to peace building' are extremely important for understanding human security of marginalised individuals, groups and communities (Conteh-Morgan 2005: 72). A study by the World Bank observed that the international system has time and again failed to rebuild the "social fabric" of war-torn societies (Conteh-Morgan 2005:76). The reason behind this neglect, argues Conteh-Morgan, is the belief that politico economic

reconstruction described as strengthening of the state and introduction of market economics can in itself promote sustainable peace that goes far beyond the end of hostilities. However, it is very important to focus on the issues of cultural integrity and identity, interethnic dialogue, social empowerment, and collective intentionality for the realisation of human security.

Engendering an emancipatory form of human security that 'empowers a local renegotiation of the liberal peace through the state-building process', does not deform the structure of the state in favour of vested interests, and shows that the needs of daily life in post conflict, development situations is the next phase in this project (Richmond 2007: 477). If a self-sustaining, emancipatory peace and not just 'an externally sustaining conservative peace' is to be established, then following elements are absolutely crucial-welfare, local ownership, 'feedback for internationally driven projects from locals', and the realisation of the indisputable association of welfare, work, culture, and the local with democratic and stable states (Richmond 2007: 477). Paul Williams argues, the path to true, stable security is through the encouragement of emancipatory politics. He further asserts, Critical Security Studies (CSS) advocate an approach to security that focuses on people, justice and change (Williams 2007:1022). Finally, it may be argued that peace cannot be imposed by the powerful states or foreign/external actors on the local population in the war-torn regions. It is imperative to empower and involve the local people and communities in the peace process.

Post-Conflict Reintegration Programmes for Child Soldiers and Bottom-up Human Security Approach

For successful reintegration of child soldiers it is imperative to incorporate the emancipatory or bottom-up approach to human security which is centered on agency of child soldiers (boys and girls), cultural integrity and involvement and empowerment of the local people and communities. In fact for sustainable post-conflict peace, it is vital to adopt community-based rehabilitation of child soldiers.

What is Community-based Rehabilitation?

Community development framework was established by David Tolfree that is now accepted by many non-governmental organisations including Radda Barnen and Save the Children Foundation-UK. The major features of this approach are as follows:

Firstly, this model emphasises the need for long term development and not just the more immediate respite from suffering.

Secondly, it underscores the significance of the social context wherein people experience stress, and not merely individual suffering.

Next, this perspective views traumatic experience as one among many aspects of stress experienced by people. Painful experience of violence may be intensified by difficulties such as poverty, unemployment, poor housing, lack of social resources and so on.

Lastly, community based initiatives place emphasis on common needs within the community rather than an individual's specific needs. It is therefore clear that a community development approach offers a more flexible response that pays attention to the social context, and includes the community while defining and implementing solutions to their situation (Twum-Danso 2000).[54]

Community-based Rehabilitation and Cultural Integrity

For post-conflict reintegration and rehabilitation of young people, some commentators and practitioners like to follow the western model of therapy and trauma counseling which focuses on the individual. While others favour the community-based traditional initiatives where the child is seen as part of a wider community and therefore for reintegrating a child soldier into society, rehabilitation of the child as well as the community is considered important. Many western experts such as Winkelmann (1997) are of the belief that children's psycho-social responses to violence have universal characteristics given that the psycho-dynamic process is the same in all human beings,

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[54] Online Source

notwithstanding age, country of origin and culture of the individual (Twum-Danso 2000).[55]

On the other hand, Reichenberg and Friedman observe:

> The child's identity is neither isolated from nor absorbed in the social fabric. It is apart and a part. Healing of trauma cannot be accomplished by an individual alone; it must take place in all of life's relevant dimensions, that is, the context of family, community and culture (Reichenberg and Friedman 1996: 318).

Similarly, McCallin suggests, the basis for successful reintegration is synonymous with family reunification as well as productive participation in community life (McCallin 1995:15). Some thinkers such as Summerfield (1996) emphasise the significance of community-wide rehabilitation which is based on social development rather than on the individual. Derek Summerfield argues, this is not to say that 'local cultures can always cope', however the ethical response would be to begin from where they are and not offer responses embedded in 'a sense of western rationality' (Snelling 2006).[56] Further, while focusing on traditional and local approaches to healing and rehabilitation in Angola and Mozambique, Honwana (1999) criticises the application of western models of therapy or healing in non-western contexts. Alcinda Honwana, a Mozambican anthropologist and specialist in post-conflict healing in the article *Traditional Healing for Child Soldiers* explains why Mozambique encouraged the traditional healing method: Western approaches are usually expensive, need specialist training and are limited in terms of the numbers they can reach. And therapies which do not incorporate the role of ancestral and malicious spirits in the 'causation or healing of trauma' may in fact obstruct attempts by family and community to provide care (Reuters 2006).[57]

However, it may be argued that integration of both the western model and the community-based approach is likely to lead to effective reintegration of child soldiers. This approach involves the psychological (individual) and social (community) aspects of

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[55] Ibid
[56] Online Source
[57] Online Source

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rehabilitation. The approach termed as 'psychosocial' is encapsulated in the Cape Town Annotated Principles and is explained as thus:

> The term 'psycho-social' underlines the close relationship between the psychological effects of armed conflict, the one type of effect continually influencing the other. 'Psychological effects' are those which affect emotions, behaviour, thoughts, memory and learning ability and how a situation may be perceived and understood. 'Social effects' refer to altered relationships due to death, separation, estrangement and other losses, family and community break down, damage to social values and customary practices and the destruction of social facilities and services. 'Social effects' may be extended to include an economic dimension, many individuals and families becoming destitute through the material and economic devastation of war, thus losing their social status and place in their familiar network (Cape Town Annotated Principles and Best Practice on the Prevention of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and Demobilisation and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa adopted on 30th April 1997).[58]

Agency of Child Soldiers

In the discourse on child soldiering, young people who participate in combat are often represented as victims in need of protection and passive actors in the contemporary warfare. This kind of representation denies these young people agency as political actors and conflict stakeholders. For instance, in African conflicts, it has been observed, one of the root causes for involvement of some of the young people in combat was their exclusion from the economic, political and social structures of their states. Therefore, it is not advisable to treat young people as mere victims or passive actors in combat. For their successful reintegration into society, it is imperative to address their grievances and involve them in peace initiatives.

Further, most DDR programmes which are extremely important for rehabilitating and reintegrating child soldiers into civilian life have been insensitive to their needs. Since child soldiers have distinctive needs, 'they should have their own DDR process, legitimated and codified in the peace agreement' (Wessells 2006: 179). Time and again DDR programmes have been fraught with errors. This is partly due to failures to learn from children's perspectives. It is imperative to incorporate children's voices in 'all

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[58] Online Source

phases of the DDR process-assessment, design, preparation, implementation, and evaluation' (Wessells 2006:180). Further, exclusion of child soldiers and prominent gender-bias creeping into the DDR programmes have contributed to human insecurity in many post-conflict situations.

Indicators of Successful Reintegration

Some of the factors essential for successful post-conflict reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers include access to quality education (which is likely to lead to employment), job skills and employment, family reunification, psychosocial support, child protection from re-recruitment, positive community response and specific needs of girl soldiers.

Access to Quality Education

Access to quality education is an extremely important component of post-conflict rehabilitation of child soldiers and deserves high priority in DDR processes. Due to their involvement in conflict since young age, former child soldiers are mostly deprived of education. In a number of conflicts such as in Uganda, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Burma, Afghanistan, children as young as five or six have participated in fighting in varied roles which include both combat and non-combat roles. These children never went to schools. In the aftermath of conflict, lack of education makes it extremely difficult for former child soldiers to seek sustainable employment and become productive citizens. However, it is also important to note that since a conflict may last for a long period (sometimes even for two or three decades), in the aftermath of the war, a number of child soldiers are no longer children and may opt for skills training rather than enrolment in schools.

Despite this, DDR planners must continue to focus on educational programmes for former child soldiers alongside skills training programmes. This is because even if former child soldiers are not children any longer in the aftermath of conflict they may opt for enrolment in schools. Some of the former child soldiers I interviewed in Sierra Leone opted for education even though they were no longer children when the conflict ended in

2002. For former child soldiers, education and economic opportunities must be individually determined and must take account of family livelihood needs (Verhey 2001).[59] Another aspect that is extremely crucial is keeping in mind the socio-economic as well as the cultural context while designing educational programmes for child soldiers. Since most child soldiers, on demobilisation, would be more concerned with earning-capacity, education must lead to job opportunity.

Job Skills and Employment

Making educational opportunities available for former child soldiers is not sufficient. Even if a number of child soldiers opt for enrolment in school, after the completion of their education, they may not be able to find sustainable employment. It is imperative for the DDR planners to bear this in mind and design educational programmes that would lead to employment opportunities. Further, for those former child soldiers who opt for skills training, DDR programmes should make available vocational and skills training that prepares them for jobs. Moreover, DDR programmes must also help these former soldiers in finding employment. In fact, this is a major drawback of most DDR programmes, even the more robust ones like Sierra Leone which is being viewed as a model for other DDR programmes. Most of over seventy former child soldiers whom I interviewed in Sierra Leone pointed to the difficulty in finding a job even after completion of their education or the skills training programme.

Further, in a number of cases, rather than vocational training, apprenticeships and micro-enterprise support have proved more effective (Verhey 2001).[60] For instance, in the aftermath of conflict in El Salvador, apprenticeships and micro-enterprise support were more effective than vocational training schemes in urban areas since they offered a more immediate means of acquiring skills and income. In addition, they helped in bringing at least some economic activity to more rural and remote areas (ILO 2002:109).

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[59] Online Source
[60] Ibid

Moreover, it is important to note that vocational training alone does not 'enable one to earn a living or to reintegrate in a deeper sense'. A characteristic error in several well intentioned DDR and job-training programmes is to prepare far more people for a specific occupation than can be sustained by the local economy, which naturally lies in shambles. The ensuing unemployment rouses frustration and generates economic hardships that can compel young people to return to armed militias (Wessells 2006:204). This was seen in a number of post-conflict countries. Many former child soldiers whom I interviewed across Sierra Leone (Freetown, Makeni, Moyamba and Koidu Town) said that since a large number of them were trained in a specific occupation, there existed a lot of competition among these former soldiers to get a job. It is also important for the DDR planners to take account of the local socio-economic context before designing skills training programmes. This would help in making available those vocational skills training programmes that are economically and socially relevant for that particular state.

Further, although beneficial, occupational and business training programmes may also generate thorny issues such as jealousy and antipathy. Often funds are allocated by donors specifically for former child soldiers. This well-intentioned targeting can engender a potentially dangerous privileging of ex-child combatants over equally deprived villagers. Even though such issues may appear insignificant, they can explode into violence and deepen social divisions. To avoid this, it is imperative not to get involved in excessive targeting of ex-child soldiers and encourage 'the participation of all village youths'. Besides alleviating social divisions, this inclusive approach acknowledges that many war-affected children including orphans, separated children, children with disabilities, and survivors of sexual violence are in need of support, as much as, or even more than, ex-child soldiers. Therefore, reintegration is meant not just for child soldiers but for all war-affected children (Wessells 2006:204-205).

Family Reunification

Family reunification can prove to be a major source of strength and well-being for former child soldiers. Family and community acceptance is a major issue for former child soldiers. In the aftermath of conflict, most child soldiers are likely to be stigmatised

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which is likely to lead to severe psychological trauma among them. Therefore, family reunification and acceptance could help in alleviating the psychological wounds of these child soldiers.

Family reunification helps children put war behind them, get the social support which is essential for their transition into civilian life, and carry out their family obligations. Moreover, a child soldier who is residing with his or her family is 'more likely to be accepted by the community', as family rejection may indicate that the child is unsteady or dangerous (Wessells 2006:183). The basis 'for successful reintegration is synonymous with family reunification' and productive participation in community life (McCallin 1995:15). In case family reunification is not possible, Verhey points out, foster placement or support for independent living is important for successful rehabilitation (Verhey 2001).[61] However, in some cases family reunification does not lead to effective rehabilitation. For instance, some children took up arms to get away from abusive parents, and family reunification could put them at risk. In such cases, foster care is a preferred alternative. However, foster families may marginalise foster children. Therefore it is imperative to put in place monitoring mechanisms which keep a tab on the protection and well being of children who have been sent to foster homes.

As far as orphans are concerned, family reunification is not an option since they have lost both parents and have no extended family that may be ready to accept them. Moreover, in villages where war and HIV/AIDS have taken lives of most adults, fostering might not be viable. In such cases youth homes could be organised where groups of youths stay collectively and handle as a team household concerns including food security, work, health, and participation in education. This may normally be considered as a last option, however, it has a 'strong cultural basis in societies' where older children usually take care of younger children and derive satisfaction and support from this role (Mann 2004). However, it is important to exercise caution since some youths, be they ex-soldiers or not, may indulge in sexual or economic exploitation of the younger children with whom they live. Therefore, it is essential to observe and protect

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[61] Ibid

children dwelling in group situations. In addition, like other children, ex-child soldiers too require adult models, mentoring and guidance to develop fully the behaviour patterns and values appreciated in civilian life (Wessells 2006:185).

Psychosocial Support

The experience of war affects young people emotionally as well as psychologically. They often experience increased anxiety, nightmares and sleeplessness, eating disorder or loss of appetite and various other psychological problems. Briggs points out, Guillermo Carvajal, a member of the Colombian Psychoanalysis Society, has talked about the psychology of war. In his study of the psychological impact of the conflict on Colombian youth, Carvajal observes that there are two wars, one is real while the other is imaginary. The first is 'experienced from the outside', with real or concrete violent events, whereas the second is experienced solely 'in the mind, with violent mental objects generated by a violent environment'. Further, the manner in which conflict impacts a young person depends on his or her 'relation to it'. Carvajal views those who have been nurtured to have the "warrior frame of mind" as being quite different from those who endure constant mental trauma resulting from victimisation through displacement, physical wounding, or imagery (Briggs 2005:63). Therefore, it is important to distinguish between child soldiers and children who live in conflict zones but are not involved in combat.

During rehabilitation, often children accustomed to military life are unable to cope with the civilian life. Some commentators also point out that sometimes they are unable to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong since many child combatants never received any kind of social instruction or formal and moral education within civil society. Child soldiers often suffer from drug and alcohol addictions they may have developed during their participation in combat. Even if the ex-combatant is rehabilitated into society, he or she may find it difficult to adjust to civilian life due to a different pattern of the socialisation process which these child soldiers undergo during their formative years and often she or he is unable to sit still or concentrate and may experience bouts of aggressive and violent impulses. 'Psychosocial support, including traditional rituals and family and community mediation', is critical to dealing with the

aggressive behavior learned by child soldiers and to helping them cope with their horrifying experiences (Verhey 2001).[62]

Further, the restoration of social trust is one of the most fundamental psychosocial tasks for ex-child combatants (Wessells 2006:192). Without psychosocial reintegration and support child soldiers would find it extremely difficult to cope and adjust to civilian life. Psychosocial reintegration includes both western therapy and community-based rehabilitation (which may also entail traditional healing mechanisms). Individual-focused western therapy alongside communal and social support would help in effective rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers.

Child Protection from Re-recruitment

Another important factor for effective reintegration of child soldiers is prevention of child re-recruitment. The DDR processes must comprise comprehensive efforts for protection from child recruitment or re-recruitment in armed conflict. One of the integral components to ensure effective rehabilitation of child soldiers is monitoring mechanism which unfortunately most DDR programmes lack. Even the relatively well-designed DDR programme in Sierra Leone lacked monitoring mechanisms. It has been reported that some of the former Sierra Leonean child soldiers ended up fighting in the neighbouring countries such as Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Most DDR programmes focus on the needs of former child soldiers for a short period of time. Reintegration aspect of DDR which is critical for effective rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers is usually not given much importance. In a numbers of cases, former child soldiers seem to have been almost abandoned after they complete their skills training programme or finish their basic education. And the absence of monitoring mechanisms worsens the plight of former child soldiers where they are prone to recruitment in conflict in the neighbouring countries.

Many children often join new armed militias or begin engaging in criminal activity. This in turn exacerbates violence resulting in the difficulty of reintegrating

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[62] Ibid

various hostile groups into society. The monitoring of the conditions of ex-child soldiers and other CEDCs (Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances) is imperative due to the risk of remobilisation and further victimisation. Demobilised child soldiers may go back home and not join school only to be mobilised again or end up in other dangerous child labour conditions, such as mining. 'Victimised girls may become easy targets for further victimisation', rejoin armed militias as sex workers, get into prostitution, or be vulnerable to the threat of being trafficked for the purpose of prostitution (Hansen 2001: 29).

Further, during their time in armed forces or groups, child soldiers have certain privileges including food and clothing. And some children may have assumed the role of a commander. However, on demobilisation they lose these benefits. And this loss of status and privileges may compel these children to join armed militias where they are provided with these benefits. Thus it may be argued that the involvement of young people in combat not only affects the individuals or the young combatants themselves but may also have far reaching and serious implications for the society as well since if not successfully reintegrated and rehabilitated these former soldiers could pose a threat to the society.

Community Acceptance

One of the major challenges in the reintegration of former child soldiers is community acceptance. It is understandably extremely difficult for the communities to accept those child soldiers who committed atrocities against them, burned down villages and shot family members of the civilians. However, lack of community acceptance would be a major obstacle in bringing about sustainable peace. In the aftermath of conflict it is vital to set up mechanisms that help in building social trust between former soldiers and communities. A number of former child soldiers I interviewed in Sierra Leone (especially in Moyamba District: the bastion of the *Kamajors*) were accepted by their communities. In the Kono District which was the stronghold of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, although a number of former child soldiers I interviewed were accepted by their families or parents, however, the communities were reluctant to accept them.

Reintegration is a twofold process of individual adaptation and community support and acceptance (Wessells 2006:199). Cohn and Good-Win gill in their study talk about the *deinstitutionalisation of treatment* which refers to community-based strategies that ease the stigma associated with psychological therapy while utilising existing human and material resources. It is centered on the 'illness' in the relationship between the individual and the society, rather than the individual alone. They further point out, Filipino psychologists have employed a 'holistic, integrated approach' to healing which considers the whole individual or 'child in the context of the family, community and society' (Cohn and Good-Win gill 1994: 134). Community acceptance is critical for demobilised child soldiers. The community needs to be aware that the 'social development of these children has been delayed' and they require assistance that facilitates the resumption of 'this interrupted learning and socialisation process'. Simultaneously, the former soldiers need to learn ways to convey and gratify their needs peacefully. The society and other children may require some protection from former soldiers till the time they are able to pursue non-violent conflict resolution (Hansen 2001:28-29).

Specific Needs of Girl Soldiers

As far as girl soldiers are concerned, they have been frequently marginalised in the DDR process. Gender equity is an indispensable component for post-conflict reintegration of child soldiers. But at the same time, reintegration or rehabilitation needs of girl soldiers are different from boys, therefore, reintegration programmes have to be adapted to fit the distinctive needs of girls.

Another aspect which demands attention is the issue of girls who volunteered, and also whether these girls would want to be reintegrated into the society from which they had intended to escape. Dyan Mazurana and Susan McKay's study, *Where are the Girls? Girls in Fighting Forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Mozambique: Their Lives during and After War* (2004), discovered that in the aftermath of war, girls and women are usually expected by organisations and community leaders to take up

traditional gender or 'female' roles rather than utilising the strengths they have cultivated to make new choices and seek broader opportunities.

For instance, in the case of Ethiopia, Angela Veale observes, during demobilisation one of the things that former girl soldiers missed was 'the collective nature of military life and the sense of common purpose'. Tigrean girls who joined the fighting forces of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) 'rejected the cultural markers of femaleness' while adopting more masculine ones (Veale 2004: 107). However, their reintegration into Ethiopian civil society amounted to a loss of collective identity through which they identified themselves since they were children. Further, after reintegration into civilian life they were expected to adopt the 'traditional feminine' values of Ethiopian society. Therefore, although difficult to ensure, reintegration programmes must disseminate information among the community members on the drawbacks of pressurising former girl soldiers to take up age old oppressive and discriminatory 'traditional feminine' roles.

Overall, it may be argued that DDR and reintegration programmes should be adapted to include the specific needs of girl soldiers and girl soldiers with babies. At the same time it is vital to take account of the socio-economic context while designing these programmes. In this sense involvement of the entire community is vital so that ex-girl soldiers are accepted by the former. Community-based approaches may also prove beneficial in addressing present and past sexual abuse of former girl soldiers which often leads to severe physical health problems and psychological disorders. One major concern is the threat of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). HIV and AIDS represent a major threat to these former girl soldiers and their children.

Adults Who were Engaged as Former Child Soldiers

Further, in a number of cases, young people who joined the armed forces or militias as children, by the time of demobilisation are no longer children. Often DDR and reintegration programmes fail to address their needs since they are not included in these programmes which deal with only those soldiers who are below eighteen at the time of demobilisation. However, DDR programmes must take account of the needs of grown up

former child soldiers since they also deserve to be a part of the reintegration programmes which entail education or vocational training and psychosocial therapy. This is because these people too missed out on education, spent their formative period in armed forces or groups, were separated from their families and communities and were often abused and exploited by their leaders and military commanders.

Conclusion

On the whole, the DDR programmes for child soldiers must espouse the bottom-up approach to human security as DDR needs to be adapted to specific socio-cultural needs. Approaches which focus merely on the individual are usually not very effective in the non-western context. Therefore, programmes which seek to reintegrate and rehabilitate former child combatants must also involve entire communities. Further, successful reintegration of child soldiers into society is only possible if the war ceases, because the fact remains, as long as wars persist, it is likely that children and youth, especially those who are economically, socially or politically disadvantaged or marginalised, will continue to enlist in armed factions or armed groups either by volition or through coercion.

It has also been observed in certain cases that even if the war formally ends and a peace accord is signed between the conflicting parties, the fighting persists and soon erupts into a war, where young people are easily and often readily recruited by the armed forces and groups. Hence to deal effectively with the problem of child soldiering, it is imperative to address the root causes or the underlying factors responsible for this practice. It is also essential to deal with the factors which result in armed conflicts and persuade the conflicting parties to engage in non violent or peaceful conflict resolution.

Therefore, alongside demobilisation and reintegration of child soldiers into civilian life, it is essential to focus on the restructuring and reconstruction of the war torn society through the assistance of the international community and NGOs involved in the rehabilitation process. Unless the factors which lead these young people to take up arms are addressed, rehabilitation efforts will not prove effective. Considering the impact of

child participation in combat and its ramifications for the society it may be argued that psychosocial reintegration programmes for former child combatants are an important step towards reconciliation and peace building, ensuring stability and security of the violence-affected region. Finally, a reasonable period of committed resources is critical for the DDR programme for child soldiers.

Chapter 3

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Process and Human Security

Traditionally, the process of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) in conflict or post-conflict situations has focused primarily on national security rather than human security. It has given precedence to disarmament and demobilisation over reintegration of combatants. This chapter discusses the evolution of DDR, while analysing the place of human security in this process. It further attempts to evaluate the role of DDR programmes in the reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers.

What is DDR?

By and large, DDR is a process commenced subsequent to a conflict and aimed largely at ensuring the transition of combatants into civilian life. DDR frequently involves a "combination of 'integration' into standing armies or police forces and into 'civilian' life" (Muggah 2005:242). Nat Coletta observes that the DDR process is a prerequisite for revitalising civil society, alleviating poverty and sustaining development in post-conflict countries that necessitates the demobilisation of forces and the ensuing reintegration of former combatants into productive civilian lives (Edloe 2007:4). Further, the Brahimi Report describes demobilisation and reintegration as integral to post-conflict stability and to allaying the probability of conflict recurrence (Kingma 2002:181).

Porto et al. claim, the growing realisation that controlled processes of DDR are at the heart of demilitarisation and sustainable peace in war-shattered societies has had following effects. Firstly, it has resulted in the increase of DDR programmes worldwide. Next, it has led to the initiation of new actors in the arena, assigned with the 'design and implementation of these programmes'. Besides UN peacekeeping operations and bilateral military assistance given by third countries in support of DDR and Security Sector Reform (SSR) processes, international development and donor agencies have become ever more significant players in DDR programmes, particularly the UNDP, the World

Bank (WB) and scores of NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs). Finally, it has encouraged a string of initiatives at an international level intended to enhance our 'understanding, development and implementation of these processes' (Porto et al. 2007:1). Further, it is important to note, in countries such as Liberia, another "R" for rehabilitation has been added by DDR planners, with the process being called DDRR. However, DDR is the more extensively used expression (Wessells 2006:154).

The UN states, it has acquired extensive, perhaps unmatched experience during the course of ten years in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment. Operations that have added to this practice comprise the United Nations Transition Assistance Group in Namibia; the United Nations Observer Group in Central America; the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia; two United Nations Angola Verification Missions; the United Nations Operation in Somalia II; the United Nations Operation in Mozambique; the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala; the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium; and the United Nations Observer Missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The UN further notes, these operations have been examined at length by both the UN itself as well as outside experts with the purpose of identifying lessons learned (UN 2000).[63]

Evolution of DDR Programmes

DDR is a relatively recent mechanism espoused by the development community in view of post-conflict reconstruction. The 'renewed international commitment to UN-sponsored' peacekeeping operations and reconstruction efforts during the early post Cold War era prompted the emergence of DDR programmes on the development landscape. Many early missions such as Namibia and Cambodia were early assessment cases for DDR (Muggah 2005:243). Since 1989, international efforts to stop prolonged conflicts in Africa, Latin America, and Asia have involved continued investments in the DDR of soldiers from the warring parties (Humphreys and Weinstein 2005:1).

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[63] UN Online Source

Many of these programmes have been components of 'comprehensive political settlements, negotiated and agreed to' under the vigilance of international observers following years of unresolved conflict (Humphreys and Weinstein 2005:2). Other demobilisation programmes have been led by winning parties in civil war. In some cases, external actors have used coercive means to ensure disarmament and the restoration of security. However, across all these cases, the rationale of DDR has been reduction in the size of armed forces while reinstating a 'legitimate monopoly over the use of force by the government' (Humphreys and Weinstein 2005:2).

The United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) in 1989 was the first UN peacekeeping operation to take on disarmament and demobilisation (Humphreys and Weinstein 2005:2). Since then, DDR has been an important component of UN operations in many countries beginning with El Salvador in the early 1990s. Africa has experienced the maximum number of DDR processes (Patel 2009:249). The Child Soldiers Global Report 2008 states, the bulk of DDR programmes in the last decade have taken place in Sub-Saharan Africa with support from peacekeeping missions (CSC 2008).[64]

By the closing stages of 1990s the UN had helped in the implementation (with varying levels of success) of DDR programmes in many countries including Namibia, Cambodia, Somalia, Eastern Slavonia, Guatemala, Angola, Mozambique, Baranja and Western Sirmium, Sierra Leone and Liberia. As of 2007, DDR was integral to a number of UN peacekeeping operations in countries including Burundi, the Ivory Coast, the DRC, Haiti, Liberia and Sudan. In these "complex" and "multidimensional" operations, DDR programmes are considered central – together with security sector reform, humanitarian assistance, human rights, democratisation, and rule of law programmes (Porto et al. 2007:7).

By 1998 the UN Secretary-General report authoritatively declared that the reintegration of former combatants and others into productive society was one of the

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[64] Child Soldier Coalition Online Source

main concerns of post-conflict peace building. While lacking a doctrine and minimum standards as well, DDR became a vital component of peace processes, generally brought in early on in the post-conflict phase and aimed at generating confidence between parties and counteracting likely spoilers. In few years time DDR came to hold a vital place in so-called military – civilian transition operations—and to be implemented by the UN, the World Bank, OECD donor governments and scores of agencies and NGOs. Standardised templates for DDR were introduced and best practices articulated by UN agencies such as the Department for Peacekeeping (DPKO) and think tanks (Muggah 2005:243). Disturbingly, the " 'success' of DDR, much less definitions of success itself", were hardly ever mulled over (Muggah 2005:243).

In the last two decades, DDR programmes have called for considerable attention from academics and policymakers. This is mainly due to the increase in the number of DDR programmes globally and an extended and more sustained participation of the international community, particularly the UN in these sorts of programmes (Porto et al. 2007:7). While there is no doctrinal approach to DDR yet, nonetheless, substantial literature has appeared in recent times, mostly, theoretical, descriptive, and distillations of supposed best practices and 'lessons learned' (Muggah 2005:242).

A major reconsideration of disarmament and DDR from the perspective of transition and post-conflict took place with the UN Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Muggah 2005:245). In the Brahimi Report, the panel cautioned against deploying troops under the auspices of vague mandates and against the particular risks of carrying out disarmament in such a situation. In addition, it underscored the significance of 'clear chains of command, a commonly shared doctrine and competence' as well as the risks of divergent objectives. Smaller state coalitions or other regional organisations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the former Organisation for African Unity (now African Union) have also stumbled upon similar difficulties relating to DDR and weapons reduction (Muggah 2005:245).

'In the intervening years, pursuing the conventional wisdom- that integrated effort is good'- mounting all through the UN organisation, undoubtedly at HQ level, the UN as an institution has shifted towards a more integrated implementation of DDR with the purpose of harnessing the institutional skills of a range of UN agencies and build dormant synergies (Molloy 2008:5). This integrated approach has been instituted through blending the 'capacity of DPKO's technical and resource advantage in short-term peacekeeping with the development and specialised agencies' medium to long-term capacity in' development and peacebuilding, especially the UNDP and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). The institutional framework to shore up and lead this integration was initiated in December 2006 with the publication of the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS). The publication consists of 700 pages and 24 Sections, its purpose being the integrated implementation of DDR, developed in collaboration between fourteen UN agencies from 2004 and 2006 (Molloy 2008:5). The IDDRS are 'a set of policy and guidelines' for undertaking DDR programmes in post-conflict environments across the globe. The new standards, along with a variety of tools for programme staff on the ground, will ensure that comprehensive, consistent and coordinated programmes are available to attend to the needs of children as they transition from military life into community and family life (UNICEF 2006).[65]

DDR Process

DDR of ex-combatants 'forms a continuum that is itself a part of the entire peace process': Where disarmament concludes demobilisation must begin and must ultimately result in reintegration, so that sustainable peace and development is made possible in countries emerging from conflict (UN 2000:1). The Security Council, which under the UN Charter has the chief responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, regards disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment as a subject of prime importance (UN 2000:3).

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[65] UNICEF Online Source

Definition

Disarmament

In the context of peacekeeping, disarmament refers to 'the collection, control and disposal' of small arms, explosives, ammunition, and 'light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population'. It also focuses on developing responsible arms management programmes (UN 2000:15). Disarmament develops confidence by indicating warring parties' agreement to the peace accord and their compliance to stand down their armies (Wessells 2006:155). Further, successful disarmament programmes implement a pragmatic, flexible and broad timetable to accommodate holdups in the conclusion of the disarmament process and facilitate gradual confidence-building (Edloe 2007:9).

In addition, during the disarmament stage, it is imperative to build cantonment sites in rural as well as urban areas that are in reach of the armed public and make possible secure and protected storage of weapons awaiting destruction. As per this procedure, ex-combatants can walk to cantonment sites situated close to their bases, make use of transport provided by the international and regional peacekeeping forces, or be disarmed close to residential neighborhoods, camps, or barracks, where they reside, train, or work. To promote complete disarmament, these assembly areas should be situated in secure environments (Edloe 2007:10). Inadequately conceived and implemented DDR programmes may contribute to the making of future conflicts. For instance, in the case of Mozambique, incomplete disarmament contributed to the proliferation of weapons throughout that state as well as in the neighbouring countries such as Malawi, South Africa, and Zambia. By 1998, Mozambique was the 'single largest source of small arms' to the South African domestic market (Knight 2008:4). On the other hand, disarmament in Sierra Leone was quite a success.

Demobilisation

Demobilisation implies a process whereby armed forces - government and/or opposition or factional forces - either scale back or entirely disband, as part of a broader transition from 'war to peace'. Demobilisation entails the assembly, quartering, disarmament,

administration and discharge of ex-combatants, who may be provided with some form of compensation and other support to promote their transition to civilian life. In various operations and reports, the terms "cantonment sites", "encampment sites" and "assembly areas" have been used interchangeably (UN 2000:15). Action for the Rights of Children (ARC) has been quite involved in the issue of child soldiers and in the context of demobilisation, it states, 'Demobilisation is the first step in the child's return to a normal life' that must entail initiatives to facilitate social reintegration (Peters 2005:40). Success of demobilisation programmes could by and large be evaluated by seeing if the demobilisation contributed to peace building and whether the former combatants have been able to reintegrate effectively into civilian life (Kingma 2001:411).

Reintegration

Reintegration programmes refer to assistance measures provided to ex-combatants that would enhance the potential for their as well as their families' socio-economic reintegration into civil society. Reintegration programmes could involve income generating activities, vocational training, and cash assistance or compensation in kind (UN 2000:15). The World Bank (2002) asserts, the reintegration of child combatants must underscore three major elements; these include family reunification, psychological support and education, and economic opportunity (Knight 2008:6). In some cases, Kingma describes the term reintegration as a misnomer since not all former combatants go back to their place of origin (Kingma 2002:183).

While demobilisation is a short-term process, reintegration is a long-term process calculated in years. The latter is a reciprocal process that involves not just the adaptation of ex-soldiers but 'the rebuilding of healthy families and communities' as well, in the absence of which ex-soldiers have hardly any positive roles and choices (Wessells 2006:160). Further, it is imperative that the reintegration and healing of children affected by armed conflict are rooted in 'local world views and meaning systems' so as to be sustainable and effective (Honwana 2005:4). The rehabilitation and social reintegration of children in conflict should be accompanied with larger strategies of poverty eradication and social development (Honwana 2005:163).

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On the basis of their experience in the Horn of Africa, Kingma and Grebrewold identify a number of conditions in which the reintegration of displaced populations and ex-combatants may impact the development or re-emergence of conflicts. These include the absence of a functioning state, legal system, and appropriate conflict management systems, lack of economic opportunities, political marginalisation, competition for natural resources, and the accessibility of light weapons. Put differently, war-shattered countries with demobilised combatants are also prone to slipping back into conflict if a comprehensive DDR strategy is not put in place (Knight 2008:4).

Although reintegration is a long-term process while disarmament and demobilisation are short-term processes, yet the DDR planners have mostly focused upon the latter and marginalised the former. If former child soldiers have to be effectively reintegrated and rehabilitated into civilian life then it is critical to place much importance on reintegration aspect of the DDR programmes. Further, continuous flow of resources for adequate period is imperative for effective reintegration of both former soldiers and the community.

Reinsertion

Reinsertion refers to the immediate post-demobilisation package provided to former combatants as interim assistance prior to the longer-term reintegration process. Subsequent to their discharge, former combatants are confronted with immediate financial crisis due to the loss of income, as they await the slow process of income generation during the reintegration period. Reinsertion is a special assistance (frequently termed *transitional safety net*) to assist former combatants mitigate the effects of this crisis and it entails basic material needs of these combatants and their families; these include food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, education of children, and agricultural tools. While reintegration is a long-term continuous socio-economic process of development, reinsertion is short-term financial/material assistance to deal with immediate needs, and may last for a year (Isima 2004:4).

Irma Brett outlines the components of a standard Child DDR Programme. These are as follows:

Disarmament:
☐ Disarmament
☐ 'Removal and decommissioning of arms' as well as landmines and so on.

Demobilisation:
☐ Interim Care Centre (separate from adults)
☐ Family tracing
☐ Health care and check-ups. Note: No cash payments are provided to children!

Reintegration:
☐ Special care and psychological support
☐ Community structures, for instance, welfare committees, children's clubs and so on.
☐ Education including catch-up education
☐ Vocational training
☐ Business training
To abet sustainable reintegration, services need to be available to help older children with:
☐ Referral and placements in professions (in the new security forces as well)
☐ Assistance or support to establish businesses
☐ Business Development Services to guide as well as aid the new entrepreneurs
☐ 'Targeted investments in infrastructure' that would help augment local economies
☐ 'Scholarships and referral services to higher education' (Specht 2009:199).

Actors

Actors engaged in DDR programmes include national and local government authorities, UN agencies, the international financial institutions, bilateral donors, and international as well as local NGOs, grassroots organisations, communities, and combatants, former combatants, and their dependents. The suitable or appropriate task of the national government and rebel groups in the planning and implementation of DDR programmes is an integral issue since national ownership of the process is essential for its success. This implies that the national government must frequently be the key actor in developing and implementing DDR policies, however, it would be erroneous to equate national ownership with government ownership. This could in fact lead to the government using this opportunity to consolidate its power to the detriment of civil society and groups of former armed opponents, consequently prompting grievance among people. For instance, corrupt leaders could use resources allotted to DDR programmes for their personal political ambitions (which includes rewarding past allegiances, buying support,

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discrediting opposition parties, or supporting particular constituencies such as religious or ethnic groups) (IPA and UNDP 2002:4-5).

Nevertheless, the significance of government authority for general stability cannot be undervalued. Governance programmes highlighting transparency and accountability can help in alleviating the hazard of government overreach and corruption. Besides, government control and responsibilities should be laid out in the peace agreement, which is also required to provide for 'the equal treatment of all groups', including former combatants, not considering their pre-peace allegiances (IPA and UNDP 2002:4-5). In Mozambique, the peace agreement, in view of this requirement, established a committee on reintegration presided over by the UN with government as well as RENAMO participation. Through a sense of ownership of the process ex-combatants can be prevented from thwarting the peace process. Therefore, it is imperative to include all relevant parties and rebel groups in the larger peace process as early as possible. There was agreement at the workshop on the necessity for an equally broad-based commission in planning and managing DDR programmes. Specialisation, a limited mandate and life span are key to successful functioning of such bodies. Such commissions in Sierra Leone and Mozambique were regarded as extremely significant in strengthening national unity. A non-inclusive DDR process can strengthen existing inequalities whereas a well-envisaged programme can in fact help in addressing existing social structures and stratifications (IPA and UNDP 2002:4-5).

Further, involvement of former combatants in designing reintegration programmes can reinforce their sense of ownership of the process and increase the likelihood of its success. Their participation can also facilitate the formulation of viable and suitable programmes since former combatants, as well as other local actors, often have a greater understanding of the social issues, structures and networks that have grown during a conflict. Another aspect that deserves attention is the identity, or self-conception of former combatants. If former combatants are viewed as a distinct group, 'separate from rest of the society', they will persist in identifying themselves as such, insisting on special benefits and 'targeted economic opportunities over the long-term'. Most of all,

former combatants who identify themselves as belonging to a group separate from the rest of the society may have problems reintegrating socially as well as psychologically. On the other hand, there is a possibility that most ex-combatants, 'marked by their war experience', continue to see themselves in the context of this experience despite the launching of a DDR programme (IPA and UNDP 2002:4-5).

International Law on DDR of Child Soldiers

The Geneva Conventions (1949) and its 1977 Protocols, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), offer the 'fundamental law and guiding principles' that are supposed to strengthen initiatives on behalf of children, including disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes. While preparing the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration plan the vital principles are family reunification, gender equity, non-discrimination, non-institutionalisation and non-stigmatisation of children. It is imperative to consult children at various stages of the demobilisation and reintegration process. Most of all, children should participate in deciding their fates as regards issues of family reunification, vocational or educational opportunities (UN 2000:21-22).

The Optional Protocol also deals with post-conflict issues, such as demobilisation and reintegration of child combatants. In this context, Article 6 of the Optional Protocol states that persons enlisted or employed in hostilities are to be demobilised and provided with all appropriate support for their psychological and physical recovery in addition to their social reintegration (article 6(3)) (Mezmur 2008: 207). Mezmur goes on to argue, the Optional Protocol is of little use in dealing with cross-border recruitment. Paragraph 11 of its Preamble, states 'condemning with the gravest concern the recruitment, training and use within and across national borders of children in hostilities by armed groups distinct from the armed forces of a State.....' (emphasis added). Although this lead is not pursued in 'any substantive provisions'. 'Cross-border recruitment also upsets DDR programmes', and 'makes the applicability of the existing provisions' of the Optional Protocol tricky. Hence, the trend of cross-border recruitment of child soldiers has not been visibly taken up by human rights instruments and deserves a more resolute action or response (Mezmur 2008: 208).

Further, on the issue of girls, there is wide acknowledgment of their participation in armed forces or groups, in combat as well as non-combat roles and as victims of rape, sexual slavery, and other forms of sexual violence. Security Council resolutions have frequently emphasised the need to consider the particular requirements and 'vulnerabilities of girls affected by armed conflict', including girls engaged in armed forces and militias. The significance of taking into consideration the needs of girls during DDR processes was explicitly reiterated by the Paris Principles (2007) (CSC 2008).[66] Moreover, the IDDRS explicates 'policy guidance on the gender aspects of the various stages' in a DDR process while sketching out female-specific actions and gender-aware interventions that should be undertaken. Besides, the IDDRS offers 'guidance on mainstreaming gender' into all DDR policies and programmes with the purpose of generating gender-responsive DDR programmes. 'All UN and bilateral policies and programmes are strongly encouraged' to act in accordance with the Security Council resolution 1325 (UNDDR).[67]

DDR and Human Security

As mentioned earlier, DDR programmes have customarily drawn attention to national security engaging more actively in disarmament and demobilisation rather than reintegration of former combatants, thus marginalising human security. If the reintegration aspect of the DDR is neglected then human security is likely to get threatened. This is because reintegration is a long-term process which requires adequate attention in terms of its planning, design and resources. Reintegration aspect of the DDR involves educational programmes, skills training programmes, and psychosocial rehabilitation (which entails individual therapy and community-based rehabilitation). If reintegration programmes do not lead to effective rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-child soldiers in terms of community acceptance, psychosocial healing and sustainable employment then these former soldiers are likely to end up on streets, engage in criminal activity, join armed gangs, or armed militias or gangs in the neighbouring countries. This was seen in a number of West African states such as Guinea, Liberia, Ivory Coast and

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[66] Ibid
[67] UNDDR Online Source

Sierra Leone; or even in the case of Mozambique where former child soldiers slipped into neighbouring countries such as South Africa.

Traditional approaches to DDR have focused mostly on military and security objectives, and consequently this has led to these programmes being formulated in relative isolation from the budding field of transitional justice and its concerns with justice, historical clarification, reparations and reconciliation. Likewise, assessments of DDR programmes have usually been technocratic exercises focused on calculating the quantity of weapons collected and combatants registered. By limiting DDR to 'dismantling the machinery of war,' these programmes have been unsuccessful in effectively considering how to move beyond demobilising combatants to assisting in social reconstruction and coexistence (Theidon 2007:67). Most DDR policies have viewed programme benefits in the sense of national security, the transformation of military resources 'to civilian use, the better use of human capital', as well as the advancement of better financial management (Carballo et al. 2000).[68]

In recent times, 'the overarching concept of DDR' has had to develop to put greater stress on a more 'holistic approach in the context of the Human Security Agenda', and the attainment of 'as close as possible to a just settlement' in post-conflict situations, in addition to greater deliberation of the requirement for all endeavours to add to peace building. Against this backdrop, it has become apparent that it is not appropriate for DDR process to focus merely on the quantity of weapons collected. Weapons eliminated from a conflict situation can be easily restored. The deciding factor of successful disarmament must be the decline in the figures of armed incidents instead of the numbers of arms collected (Molloy 2008:5-6).

In addition, it is also not fitting for the DDR programmes to focus merely on former soldiers; the actual perpetrators of bloodshed and violence. Their reintegration is not possible if the community will not, or cannot, accept them. Hence, with wide community economic recovery past the scale of any sole DDR programme, a broader and

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[68] Online Source

holistic vision of reintegration which 'develops the derived synergy of integration of all local, national and international' endeavors at peace building and recovery should be taken into account while aiming for a successful DDR process. According to this perspective - towards 'more holistic evolution from traditional DDR' - it would appear that what the soldiers express about their experience in DDR, cannot offer full explanation regarding the impact of a programme. Molloy observes, it is imperative to lay more emphasis on 'what the community says', besides consideration of the several proxy pointers 'arising through integrated implementation' and manifest in the social, political and economic development of the post-conflict situation (Molloy 2008:6). The definition which focuses on the new concept 'encapsulating a Human Security approach to the process', developed in 2004 in Sierra Leone as 'DDR is a concept which places weapons beyond use, in the context of improving community security through social and economic investment in the community' (Molloy 2008:6).

Gender, Human Security and DDR Process

One of the major shortcomings in the DDR programmes is marginalisation of girl soldiers. So far most DDR programmes have regarded girl soldiers as camp followers in armed militias and not girl combatants and thus have excluded them from the DDR process. However, it is important to bear in mind that according to the International Law every person below eighteen years of age who is recruited by an armed force or group in any capacity (both combat and non-combat roles) is a child soldier. Consequently, all former girl soldiers, whether they participated in combat or non-combat roles or regardless of whether they possess a weapon to hand over during registration in DDR, should be given the opportunity to participate in the DDR programme. Then of course it is up to them if they would like to opt out of the DDR due to stigma.

The weapons criteria for registration in the DDR programme has been a continuous source of concern in the participation of former child soldiers, especially girls in the DDR process. Unfortunately, most DDR programmes include only those child soldiers who present a weapon for registration in the DDR. However, large numbers of girls as compared to boy soldiers do not own a weapon. Although, in most conflicts

across the world girls have been involved in combat roles, however, girls have also been used as domestic workers or sex slaves who did not take active part in fighting. Hence, the weapons criterion falls flat in the effective demobilisation and reintegration of child soldiers. In the DDR process in Sierra Leone, officially it was not mandatory for former child soldiers to hand over a weapon to register in the DDR programme, however, in practice only those former soldiers who possessed a weapon could enter DDR. And large numbers of girls did not own a weapon which consequently led to their exclusion from the process. Other than the weapons criteria and stigma in the case of girls' participation in the DDR; security conditions in the DDR camps was a major concern due to which a number of former girl soldiers refrained from entering them.

In Sierra Leone, around thirty percent of child soldiers who participated in conflict were girls, however only eight percent (513) of the ex-child soldiers in the DDR programme were female. This failure to focus on the needs of girl soldiers is one of the major shortcomings in Sierra Leone's DDR programme. This is in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1314 on children and armed conflict, according to which special attention must be given to the needs of girls during conflict. The DDR programme in the country failed to take account of the 'gender-specific roles played by girls and the complexity of their situations' (Child Rights Coalition Sierra Leone 2009:6).

Further, Ann Tickner notes, when security is considered from the perspective of the individual, it appears that new thinking is beginning to offer definitions of security that are less state-centric and less militaristic. However, scant attention has been given either to gender issues or to women's specific needs with respect to 'security or to their contributions toward its achievement' (Tickner 1992:53). Experiences in Liberia and elsewhere reveal that DDR programmes fall short of effectively identifying and reaching girls involved in armed forces and groups. If women linked with armed forces and groups have been given insufficient attention in DDR processes, girls seldom 'figure as a target group in their own right in most programmes', this is despite the fact that they constitute a considerable as well as growing share of armed groups. The problem begins during the assessment stage, where either modest or no effort at all is made to trace the girls and to

ask for their views on their concerns, needs and ambitions (Specht 2009:200-201). Anuradha Chenoy argues, historical experience shows that human security 'needs to be engendered' since women's security cannot be included with people's security because women have special needs and have been 'marked as special targets' (Chenoy 2005:177).

Further, a report on the Assessment of Women Associated with the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Southern Sudan states that reintegration assistance to girls and women, besides prioritising social reintegration requirements, must draw attention to tackling some of the most basic needs including food, clothing, shelter, health care and access to sustainable livelihoods. As regards reintegration of girls and women, one extremely challenging concern is tackling issues involving a high level of stigma. This includes sexual and gender-based violence or abuse, non-legal marriages and survival prostitution. Bush marriages – relationships formed within the armed groups - are extremely complex issues seldom dealt with in the existing reintegration processes. In Liberia, ex-bush husbands assailed an Interim Care Centre with the intention of getting back their 'wives'. In the case of Sudan, women linked to armed forces and groups claimed that they were totally rejected by the man's family or their own families due to non-payment of dowry, this signifying a serious impediment to their reintegration (Specht 2009:201).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, another aspect which deserves attention is the question of girls who volunteered, and if at all these girls would want to be reintegrated into the society from which they had sought escape. Brett and Specht in their research point to the extremely high prevalence of domestic violence and abuse as the only or key reason given by girls for joining armed groups: further causes 'were the exception rather than the rule'. Brett and Specht argue, regardless of the small sample, common sense implies that this finding may well be correct since in various societies girls are restricted to the domestic chores more than boys. Consequently, besides being more susceptible to abuse there, these girls also have fewer avenues for escape. Erika Paez notes, in Colombia some forty percent of the girls who enter the armed militias do so because of domestic violence and family abuse. She points out, even though boys too

experience domestic violence, yet, as they work in the fields, they have more freedom or independence. This in turn makes the burden of exploitation not so intense. Brett and Specht observe, while this is certainly true, many boys, especially from Colombia and Sri Lanka, interviewed for their research also pointed to domestic violence as a cause for volunteering (Brett and Specht 2004:89).

Hence, instead of family reunification, for such children it is imperative to find alternative ways of reintegration. Moreover, as mentioned previously, the report *Where are the Girls?* by Mazurana and McKay discovered that on demobilisation, girls and women are generally expected by organisations and community leaders to take on traditional gender or 'female' roles rather than making use of the strengths they may have cultivated to seek broader opportunities and make new choices. This may fuel resentment and anger among those former girl soldiers who experienced gender equity and had relative freedom within the armed groups, in turn leading these girls to return to conflict.

Further, women perform important roles in DDR processes, yet they are usually not included in the planning or implementation of these programmes. However, since 2000, the UN and all other agencies dealing with DDR and other post-conflict reconstruction efforts have been better placed to amend this state of affairs through the use of Security Council Resolution 1325, which outlines a coherent and practical agenda for determining the advancement of women in peace building. Resolution 1325 acknowledges the significance of women's visibility, both in national and regional instruments as well as in bilateral and multilateral organisations. It further calls for gender awareness in 'all aspects of peacekeeping initiatives', particularly demobilisation and reintegration, advocates women's informed and active involvement in disarmament exercises, and upholds the right of women to perform their post-conflict rebuilding activities in an atmosphere free from threat of sexualised violence in particular (Farr 2005:2).

Transitional Justice and DDR

Justice, truth, and reconciliation processes, in recent times, have begun to draw attention particularly to crimes committed against children, involving children positively, through methods such as testimony that gives evidence of their experiences. UNICEF states, the recent children and youth participation in presenting testimony to national and international courts, in addition to the truth commissions reflects their exceptional role as members and as participants of their communities. However, if children are to be involved in transitional justice processes, it is imperative to respect their rights (UNICEF 2009:1).

The assessment of emerging good practices on the participation of children and youth in justice, truth, and reconciliation processes has brought to the fore several dilemmas. For instance, it is mostly accepted that children and young people who have been enlisted as child soldiers are mainly victims of armed conflict. However, there are those who believe in some sort of accountability for offenses carried out by children, arguing that it could be conducive to effective reintegration and reconciliation. Accountability mechanisms for grave abuses carried out during armed conflict comprise a broad variety of alternatives such as judicial prosecutions, restorative justice processes, traditional processes and truth commissions (UNICEF 2009:1).

Transitional Justice

UN notes, transitional justice encompasses the comprehensive measures and processes linked with a society's efforts to deal with a legacy of extensive past atrocities and abuses, so as to serve justice, ensure accountability, and achieve reconciliation (Annan and Patel 2009:3). New policy frameworks for DDR - the Stockholm Initiative for DDR (SIDDR) and the UN's IDDRS - are working towards increasing awareness of the relationship between DDR, justice and human rights by incorporating concepts of transitional justice into their functioning. The SIDDR and the IDDRS propose that the implementation of transitional justice measures may raise the possibility that DDR programmes will realise their objectives by reinforcing the legitimacy of DDR from the viewpoint of the sufferers of violence and their communities, therefore, leading to the re-

establishment of trust between citizens and government, and further contributing to reintegration and reconciliation (Annan and Patel 2009:3).

Reconciliation and Justice

Wessells identifies various models of reconciliation, one of them (Lederach 1997), portrays reconciliation as a long term process that links elements of mercy, justice, truth and peace. While other models (for instance, Kriesberg 1999; Rouhana 2004) recognise mercy and forgiveness as desirable, but not essential, and lay much more stress on achieving justice in addition to restructuring political and social relationships (Wessells 2006:209). While discussing child soldiers, two models of justice can be identified. These are retributive and restorative justice.

Retributive Justice

Retributive justice is about holding offenders responsible through punishment for the crimes committed, the severity of the punishment being proportional to the gravity of their crimes. The rationale behind this model is that the inability or failure to hold perpetrators to account generates an environment of impunity, resulting in further fighting and unlawful activity; tacitly propelling terrible acts since offenders are aware that they will not be punished (Wessells 2006:218-219).

Those who advocate this view argue that child combatants, mainly those who carried out monstrous crimes they were not directly asked to execute, must be held responsible by being penalised for their actions. A significant prerequisite being that selected child combatants are tried and incarcerated as children and not as adults. In a number of developing countries, children who are found guilty of committing crimes are apprehended in adult prisons, where they may be raped, experience discrimination and beatings, contract sexually transmitted diseases, and suffer psychological problems linked with their ill-treatment. 'The separation of juvenile justice from the adult justice system' seeks to mitigate such problems relating to 'the treatment of children as adults' (Wessells 2006:219).

As far as former child soldiers are concerned, there are several problems with the retribution model. In most armed conflicts, large numbers of children are either abducted or coerced into joining armed groups; some are abducted at a very young age. And a number of armed militias in conflict zones carry out indoctrination programmes for children so that they come to associate with the supposed "cause" of the armed group. During my visit to Sierra Leone, Mohammad Kamara, a former child soldier told me in the interview:

> I was captured by the RUF when I was just eight. I was under pressure to join the movement (Kamara 2011).[69]

Further, in a number of cases children in armed militias are forcibly drugged so that they lose their inhibitions during fighting and do not hesitate to shoot their "enemies". In Sierra Leone, Samuel Davis, an ex-child soldier told me in the interview:

> I was captured by the RUF when I was ten. They used to inject my wrist with gunpowder (Davis 2011).[70]

Suleiman Conteh, another former child soldier in Sierra Leone told me during the interview:

> In 1995, I was captured in Bombali District when I was fifteen. I was trained to fight. I was made to kill my enemies- ECOMOG, Kamajors and UNAMSIL. RUF mixed drugs with my food. Because of the influence of drugs I could not identify my enemies. My brain was mixed (Suleiman 2011).[71]

Most of over seventy ex-child soldiers whom I interviewed in Sierra Leone told me they were abducted and drugged and were forced to fight against their "enemies" and burn down villages. Not just in Sierra Leone but in a number of conflicts across the globe, many child soldiers have been subjected to similar situations. In such cases, it is not appropriate to treat children as perpetrators. Hence, if former child soldiers are tried as criminals, this may lead to their stigmatisation, and lessen their likelihood of effective integration.

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[69] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[70] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

[71] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

By ending impunity, the retribution model seeks to mitigate violence, however, retribution could fuel continuing cycles of violence. It can incite defiance and resentment among those children who were recruited through force or coercion but are treated as criminals. This in turn may lead these children to engage in more violence (Wessells 2006:220). Many courts have been reluctant to convict children for their acts during armed conflict. A working example is the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which was set up for the purpose of trying those "who bear the greatest responsibility" for war crimes (Cohn 2004). In the year 2006 the Special Court commenced its prosecution of Charles Taylor, ex-president of Liberia, for war crimes. At the time when the Special Court was being set up, acrimonious debate broke out regarding the trial of child combatants who were involved in heinous acts despite no apparent coercion or intimidation. The UN Office for the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict asserted, the Court's jurisdiction must include the most dreaded young soldiers who were not able to return home and who were not likely to have sought reintegration and rehabilitation services by themselves. Advocates of children's prosecution claimed that bringing young people into a credible system of justice was, in fact, their best option for accessing the reintegration and rehabilitation services that the UNCRC guarantees (Wessells 2006:221).

On the other hand, most humanitarian organisations engaged in intensive lobbying against trying those who were below eighteen years of age when they committed a war crime. Cause Canada, Human Rights Watch, Save the Children, UNICEF, in addition to the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers were some of these humanitarian groups. The government of Sierra Leone and a number of Sierra Leoneans who fell victim to child soldiers were of the opinion that justice could not be achieved until some children were prosecuted for their actions (Rosen 2005:147). Ultimately, the Special Court was provided with the authority to put on trial those between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. Yet, the court's prosecutor chose to deal with adult leaders, not taking any action against children (Singer 2004).[72] It would probably be too extreme a position to hold that children must never be prosecuted, yet the difficulties

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[72] Online Source

encountered by the Special Court propose the 'use of alternate means of achieving justice' (Wessells 2006:221).

Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice approach is based on notions that were initially part of clan-based or tribal cultures that face the threat of disappearing in the age of modernisation. Models of restorative justice promote communication between the offender and crime victim so as to facilitate healing, rehabilitation and reconciliation. In 1992 a similar system called penal mediation was set up in France. It involves searching for a negotiated solution to a conflict, where the offender is required to come face to face with his/her victims; if recompense or restitution is possible, the case is then not moved to court. A further instance of this practice is the concept involving family group conferences, which for centuries have been a component of Maori culture and traditions in New Zealand. These were also adopted by Israel in the 1980s for the development of Israel's strategies of restorative justice. A number of Latin American states have also implemented these kinds of projects. For instance, in 1995 the government of Colombia established two *Casas de Justicia* or Houses of Justice. These are based on meetings whereby parties in conflict confront each other and which entail 'the provision of access to legal services for low-income families' (UN 2007:101-102).

A restorative model of justice tries to repair relational damage or make restoration through the offending party's offering services or goods that indicate realisation of and repentance for the offenses it has committed. The goods or services are not intended as punishments or as full recompense for losses since what imbursement could possibly recompense someone who has lost her or his family in conflict? Yet, the damages or reparations, if properly 'constructed and agreed to by the disputing parties' in addition to the community, emblematically acknowledge the injustice and offer a way of redressing it. Contrary to the retribution model, the restorative model acknowledges that penalties and legal interpretations rarely satisfy those most affected by atrocities and violence (Wessells 2006:222). World Bank states, there exists lucid evidence that the means of preventing continuous criminal behaviour is not to excessively punish young offenders:

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harsh penalties should not be imposed, youths should not be imprisoned with adults, access to justice should be provided, and restorative justice rather than incarceration should be promoted (World Bank 2006:178).

Tutu rightly points out, contrary to the retribution approach to justice, which is frequently inconsistent with local cultural values and norms, the restorative model of justice suits many African societies' customs or norms of restoration and justice, which are embedded in the notion of Ubuntu: 'A person is a person through other persons' (Wessells 2006:224). From this perspective, justice for child combatants is less about inflicting penalties on them and more about group processes and defining reparations that heal or alleviate the social wounds involving child soldiers and the villages these children attacked (Wessells 2006:224).

New possibilities as well as new challenges emerge when children participate in justice, truth, and reconciliation processes. In several cases, child-friendly measures or procedures have been brought in to uphold the rights of children who participate and also to support their safety and protection all through the process. This can contribute towards building children's confidence and reinstating their 'sense of justice in the social and political order', while also instituting an accountability mechanism for wrongs committed against them. Nevertheless several issues linger as regards how best to preserve the rights of those children who are caught up as victims and observers or witnesses in these situations. Idyllically children's involvement must enhance as well as reinforce their protection and security, and protection measures must facilitate participation. In the long term, children's exclusion from transitional processes may lead to their frustration, making them susceptible to an ongoing cycle of violence and bloodshed, impacting future generations. Inability or failure to effectively deal with their concerns also dissipates the potential and capacity of children and young people to act as catalysts for peace-building and reconciliation in their own communities (UNICEF 2009:1).

Restorative justice may help build trust between former child soldiers and the community. It may also help in lessening the stigma against former soldiers. In the

aftermath of armed conflict or war, the international community usually sets up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in order to restore justice through a combination of reparations and truth telling. In this context, Sierra Leone is a relevant case, which had its own TRC. To a certain extent, TRC in Sierra Leone was effective in building trust between former child soldiers and the community.

Shortcomings in the DDR Process

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) argues, following criticisms of DDR programmes have been emphasised:

- they are too often politically constrained;
- international-led efforts lack adequate planning, coordination and funding;
- they fail to include all stakeholders in the society, particularly women and children;
- and they focus on the disarmament and demobilisation components and neglect reintegration (SIPRI 2005:151).

Along with these criticisms, this chapter also highlights other shortcomings or criticisms of the DDR Programmes such as arms buyback/exchange programmes, cash payments and so on.

Politically Constrained

DDR programmes are usually implemented by the international community in partnership with the state government and civil society actors. However, as compared to the state government and civil society actors, the international community which includes the UN and the donor governments usually dominates this process. Further, availability of the resources and the timing of the DDR programme depend on the whims and fancies of the international community. As a result of political constraints a number of DDR programmes such as in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast have experienced lack of committed resources for a reasonable period of time.

The UN's Briefing Note for Senior Managers IDDRS affirms, DDR is basically a politically driven process, that several DDR programmes come to a standstill or are just partly implemented due to the political scenario. Consequently, the success of the DDR process depends on the political will of the parties to 'enter into the process in a genuine

manner' (Knight 2008:6-7). As Wessells remarks, DDR processes are tidy in concept but messy in implementation. This messiness often reveals 'one or both sides' lack of political will', resulting in demobilisation delays or deceit on the DDR implementation. In addition, DDR processes frequently work under political pressures and competing agendas (Wessells 2006:161).

Lack of Adequate Planning, Coordination and Funding

Planning

Most DDR programmes, even the relatively well-designed ones such as Sierra Leone lack proper planning. In Sierra Leone, DDR camps were mostly in towns and cities which made it difficult for a number of former child soldiers to access them. Further, as far as the skills training programmes are concerned, no proper survey seems to have been conducted as regards the skills which could be useful for former child soldiers in getting a job. In my interviews with local and international NGOs in Sierra Leone, I was told that DDR focused on urban skills such as driving, construction work, masonry, soap making, beautician skills (for ex-girl soldiers) and so on. However, Sierra Leone is mainly an agricultural country and agriculture was marginalised during the designing of reintegration programmes. Therefore, in a number of cases, skills training programmes did not prove to be sustainable. Akim, an ex-child soldier at Lumley car wash, Freetown in Sierra Leone told me during the interview:

> I was captured by the RUF. I disarmed in Makeni. I learnt driving for three months. I did not receive license. License is very expensive. Now I wash cars for survival and sleep on the streets (Akim 2011).[73]

Moreover, a major flaw in the Sierra Leone DDR programme was that a number of former child soldiers were not provided with any help in getting a job after the skills training programme. This is what the majority of over seventy former child soldiers told me during my visit to Sierra Leone.

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[73] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

Yankube Sanda, an ex-child soldier in Sierra Leone told me during the interview:

> I was recruited at twelve. Foday Sankoh, the RUF leader himself recruited me in
> Bo district. When I joined the DDR programme I trained in mechanic skills for
> six months. But I did not get any help in getting a job. With my father's help I
> opened a garage in Bo. Now I have my own *okada* (motorcycle) but no license.
> License is very costly in Sierra Leone (Sanda 2011).[74]

Similary, Amadu who I interviewed in Koidu Town (Kono district) in Sierra Leone did
not receive any help in getting a job. Amadu said:

> When I was six the RUF forced me to join them. I disarmed in 2000. I went
> through DDR and learnt cobbler skill for six months. I did not get any help in
> getting a job (Amadu 2011).[75]

A significant case of poor planning is Liberia, where there was limited data and absence
of professional DDR advisors accompanied with US pressure. The programme in the
country was launched in December 2003 with loose criteria that allowed 'access to
immediate monitory and subsequent reintegration support benefits of the programme to
106,000 beneficiaries rather than the estimated 39,000 fighters' initially targeted.
Entrants who could generate 150 rounds of ammunition were qualified for all benefits
without further screening. This was an extremely flimsy criterion in an environment
saturated with ammunition, for prospective beneficiaries to an instant 'transitional
subsistence support payment of $150 and subsequent inclusion in a training package,
with monthly subsistence payments with a total value of about $1,500.' Molloy states, it
is therefore likely that around '67,000 of these 106,000 beneficiaries were never armed
elements in the first place' (Molloy 2008:4-5).

Prior to the 2003 DDR programme in Liberia, the former had also undergone
DDR in the 1990s which was concluded hastily and unsystematically between the Abuja
II accord in August 1996 and the period leading up to the elections in July 1997. In April
and May 1996, at the time of revived violence in Monrovia, armed militias plundered the

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[74] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone; *Okada* or Motorcycle is used as a public
transport in Sierra Leone. A number of former child soldiers in the country now ride *Okadas*.
[75] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

resources meant for DDR use, and external donors declined to provide further substantial support to the programme. Hence, these projects had to be radically curtailed. Ultimately, demobilisation programmes that were originally planned to continue for months, and later on for weeks, only lasted for hours. In substitute for their guns, several young soldiers received insignificant education or vocation vouchers, considering the services for which they were to be redeemed were virtually absent. Naturally, some of these ex-soldiers were drawn towards the alternative security structures that were at that time being shaped by warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor (he had a landslide victory in July 1997 elections) while others ended up in the RUF's rebellion in Sierra Leone (Olonisakin 2004:250).

Coordination

Coordination of activities is one of the key conditions for ensuring an effective relationship between a DDR process and peace building. Experience demonstrates that wide-ranging programmes are undertaken preferably by a variety of agents, 'but not necessarily coordinated by a single vision for the future'. On the question of coordination, the UNDP (2001) elucidated that in 2001, there were several different DDR activities taking place in the DRC such as the UN Mission to the DRC (MONUC) with a mandate to perform DDR activities applicable only to the foreign armed groups. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNDP as well as other organisations were carrying out a range of DDR and development activities in eastern DRC. In the meantime, the Bureau National de Mobilisation et Reinsertion (BUNADER) - a DRC government initiative - embarked on the implementation of a pilot project targeting vulnerable groups. Besides these, the UNICEF was offering further support to the demobilisation of child combatants. Reportedly, each of these activities was happening independent of each other. Now, through the publication of the UN IDDRS, such inept incongruent approaches have been drawn together (Knight 2008:5).

It is imperative for the international community to support the DDR plan and the peace agreement in a coordinated manner early in the reconciliation or negotiation process to wholly evaluate the political, financial, humanitarian, and military

requirements of an effective DDR peacekeeping mission. Effective implementation of demilitarisation programmes necessitates communication among the host government, the UN, international donor, and the humanitarian NGO community so as to formulate an "integrated technical mission" that efficiently pools resources (Edloe 2007:8).

Financial Constraints

DDR programmes, particularly in Africa, usually experience financial constraints. For instance, a severe funding scarcity of US$39 million during the Liberian disarmament programme left some 40,000 combatants susceptible to missing out on education and job training, and also seemed to leave them in danger of re-recruitment to participate in future armed conflicts (Mezmur 2008:207). Lansana Gberie and Prosper Addo in their report on Côte d'Ivoire (2004) point to various constraints or obstacles in the implementation of the DDR process, one of them is financial constraints. They argue, these have had to do with limitations and preconditions laid down by donors. Donors as well as bilateral partners set various preconditions in the field of quick-impact DDR projects, feasibility studies, and procedures or methods for recruitment. There exist constraints associated with bidding, as well as constraints regarding the rehabilitation of DDR camps. Fortunately, in Côte d'Ivoire, the government already pre-financed a number of requirements (Gberie and Addo 2004).[76]

Child Soldiers Global Report 2008, referring to DDR of child soldiers, states, continuous funding for long-term assistance is seldom available. Scarce funding accompanied with poor planning and a propensity to privilege demobilisation over longer-term reintegration objectives, have continued to challenge successful reintegration of children into civilian life (CSC 2008).[77] Countries including Afghanistan, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Southern Sudan have reported insufficient provision for long-term reintegration. In Guinea, approximately 350 members of government supported civilian militias (both children and adults) active around 2000–2001 had finished training by the year 2004 as part of a demobilisation programme. However, due to lack of funds,

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[76] Online Source
[77] Ibid

thousands of others, many enlisted as children, did not benefit from the programme. In the DRC, as a result of delayed, unpredictable as well as short-term funding, along with poor planning and mismanagement, some 14,000 ex-child combatants were excluded from reintegration support. By the end of 2006, around four years following the commencement of the programme, nearly 'half of the total 30,000 children demobilised had not received' reintegration support. Moreover, international funding had almost stopped (CSC 2008).[78]

Lack of Child Soldier Participation

Most DDR programmes have been insensitive to the needs of child soldiers and large numbers of former child soldiers have been frequently excluded from them. Further, as mentioned previously, gender-bias is quite apparent in these programmes. However, success of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for child soldiers depends much on the involvement of girls as well as boy soldiers in the DDR and the peace process.

In both Angola and El Salvador (early cases of DDR), a consultant team engaged prior to the peace accord brought early attention to child soldiers. While Angola (1994) made child soldiers a priority, in El Salvador the team's recommendations were ignored (Verhey 2001).[79] The case of El Salvador (1992) illustrates that the marginalisation or exclusion of child soldiers from the reintegration process can leave them embittered. Further, child soldiers in the country were also not part of the land allotment agreements which were central to the peace agreement (Verhey 2001a).[80]

A late negotiation led to some of those sixteen years and older being included in a land credit programme, and proposals were made for education or training for some of those fifteen or sixteen years old. However, no provisions existed for those under fifteen (Verhey 2001).[81] Here, the livelihood needs of former child soldiers were also ignored. Many ex-child combatants asserted they would like to study but were short of financial

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[78] Ibid
[79] Online Source
[80] Online Source
[81] Ibid

resources and had to prioritize income generation. In El Salvador, many ex-child combatants added to the striking growth of urban gangs and organised crime in the country, demonstrating the linkage between unsuccessful reintegration and social violence. This poses a major threat to the post-conflict societies, further illustrating the link between human security and state security.

In Mozambique (1992), child soldiers below fifteen, who fought the war for many years, could not be considered soldiers under International Law, according to the Geneva Conventions. Underage combatants seeking facilities under demobilisation schemes were not given the same benefits as regular soldiers and were instead referred to NGOs, such as the International Committee for the Red Cross and Save the Children Alliance (Honwana 2005:137). However, this left them embittered. Further, most girls were also excluded from the DDR programmes. Given the lack of publicly provided services, most children were left to fend for themselves. Some were successful, while others ended up as street children or drifted into criminal groups (Honwana 2005:140).

Angola's demobilisation exercise, which lasted from 1995 to 1997, was perhaps the first time that children were specifically included in a peace process. Though not explicitly laid out in the 1994 Lusaka Protocol, their demobilisation and reintegration was declared a priority (Verhey 2001).[82] This particular attention to child combatants was a result of intensive advocacy by varied stakeholders and of the reports from neighbouring Mozambique of child combatants' complaints regarding their denial of DDR benefits. In Angola, child combatants were given benefits packages equivalent in worth to those given to adult soldiers (Wessells 2006:162).

The Angola Programme involved an extensive community-based network of partnerships formed with the Church and other local associations. Community-based network of "catequistas" was effective in family reunification, psychosocial support and aiding individual inclusion into education or livelihood activities. Through the Catequista network and an NGO psychosocial project some outreach to girls and the disabled was

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[82] Ibid

made possible (Verhey 2001).[83] However, due to the collapse of the ceasefire, demobilised children were being re-recruited in military activity. Beth Verhey observes, the resumption of conflict effectively ended reintegration programmes; but their experience offers insights into effective reintegration approaches (Verhey 2001).[84]

The war in Angola finally concluded in April 2002 ensuing years and years of fighting and sporadic ceasefires (Wessells 2006:163). The national DDR plan in the country had called for 'the integration of UNITA soldiers' into the Angolan armed forces, following their demobilisation. The Angolan army prohibited soldiers below eighteen; consequently the process in effect excluded child combatants (Wessells 2006:163). The situation was even shoddier for girl soldiers, who mostly had not been involved as combatants, were invisible during that time, and bore enormous psychological, social and economic burdens (Wessells 2006:163).

Unlike Angola (2002), El Salvador (1992) and Mozambique (1992), the Lomé Peace Agreement in Sierra Leone (1999), a landmark agreement for child soldiers, stated that the special needs of children should be addressed and child soldiers were officially included in the DDR process. Sierra Leone has been cited as one of the most successful examples of DDR. And it is being seen as the model for other or future DDR programmes. It is important to note that in Sierra Leone, officially it was not obligatory for child soldiers to hand over a weapon or to have had combatant status to enter the DDR programme. However, in practice most child combatants who participated in the DDR process were required to hand over an automatic weapon. Over seventy former child soldiers whom I interviewed in Sierra Leone said that it was mandatory to hand over a weapon to register in the DDR programme. Therefore, those who could not show a weapon at the DDR camp were unable to go through the DDR process. Although for some of the former child soldiers (especially girls) stigma was a major factor due to which they opted out of the DDR programme, however, a number of child soldiers in Sierra Leone could not participate in DDR because they did not possess a weapon.

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[83] Ibid
[84] Ibid

In Sierra Leone, just over 6,800 child soldiers participated in the DDR programmes, when compared with the estimated 48,000 child soldiers (Wessells 2006:166). Further, girls made up around thirty percent of child soldiers in the conflict, yet just eight percent of the ex-child soldiers present in the DDR programme were female (CSC 2008).[85] Sylvenius, an ex-child soldier in Sierra Leone told me during the interview:

> I was recruited by the RUF in the Moyamba district when I was seven. I was with the RUF for two years. When I was eight the RUF gave me a gun but I was not able to lift it. When the DDR programme was launched I could not enter it because some RUF commander took my gun (Sylvenius 2011).[86]

Foday Shilloh, another former child soldier from Pademba Road, Freetown in Sierra Leone told me in an interview:

> I wanted to disarm but left the gun in a fight. Then I went to Moyamba district to look for my parents. My father accepted me. Most people in the community make bad comments about me. Now I am a professional singer and I also do odd jobs (Shilloh 2011).[87]

Neglecting Reintegration

One of the key lessons of earlier DDR processes is that organisationally de-linking the disarmament and demobilisation process from that of 'planning and delivering reinsertion and reintegration support' generates institutional rivalries that challenge the effective and successful delivery of DDR programmes. However, considering the huge number of actors normally engaged in devising and delivering or carrying out DDR activities, creating these linkages is not an easy task (SIDDR 2005:23).

Wessells observes, in 'some cases the military agendas of standing down troops' and reorganising the 'remaining forces into a unified national army' are prioritised over reintegration, which must drive the complete process (Wessells 2006:161). This is partly

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[85] Ibid

[86] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

[87] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

due to the fact that political leaders receive more political mileage by demobilising soldiers, which leads to immediate gains and reinforces confidence in peace, than by supporting the slower process of reintegration. If they direct more funds and effort to demobilisation than to reintegration, they 'shortchange reintegration, which best serves children's rights, peace and development' (Wessells 2006:161). The prevalent agreement that reintegration is the weakest link of the DDR process has given way to pressure for reform. In the UN IDDRS, the UN highlights the deficiency of reintegration efforts while insisting on:

> the need for measures to be conducted in consultation and collaboration with all members of the community and stakeholders engaged in the community, and that [DDR programmes] make use of locally appropriate development incentives (Theidon 2007: 71).

Lack of adequate focus on the reintegration aspect of DDR has adversely affected reintegration of former child soldiers. As mentioned previously, reintegration programmes entail access to education, skills training programmes, psychosocial rehabilitation, involvement and empowerment of the local population and the community. If reintegration efforts are not given adequate attention the state becomes prone to relapsing into conflict.

Arms Buyback/Exchange Programmes

In an environment where the peace is arrived at through a comprehensive accord 'with a mandate for DDR, disarmament is a voluntary process', based on the mutual confidence and goodwill of the parties, and by and large observed by the international community. In such a situation cash payment becomes integral for encouraging ex-combatants to surrender their weapons through arms buyback/exchange programmes. The UN has taken up several arms buy-back programmes in its disarmament programmes in the African continent, including Liberia, Mozambique, and Somalia (Isima 2004:3). One advantage of the arms buy-back or exchange is offering the financial incentive for former fighters to willingly hand over weapons, which could or else be employed as a means of livelihood and security.

However, a regular problem concerning arms buy-back programmes is that they could be perceived negatively as being cash for weapons and can simply be misused for pleasure and consumption. In addition, experiences in the African continent have exposed the conditions in which cash incentives may not merely fall short of meeting expectations, but may also engender their own problems for the wider security. In regions with porous borders, scarce economic opportunities and widespread insecurity, cash inducement may not ease the problem of insecurity (Isima 2004:3). Knight states, guns–camps–cash approach appears to offer no more than a limited perspective for coping with a variety of difficult issues concerning the DDR process (Knight 2004).[88]

Identification through Commanders' Lists

In DDR processes implemented across the globe the target group has been identified through lists of unit members provided by commanders. Access to the DDR and assistance is dependent upon figuring in one of these lists. This system was developed in the backdrop of comparatively 'organised' conflicts, for instance Mozambique, where it was somewhat clear 'who was and who was not' a part of the armed groups. However, this system leads to complexities in situations such as Liberia where armed groups are not so organised and where it is difficult to delineate civilians from combatants. A frequent problem is power abuse by the commanders in identifying beneficiaries. This method by and large discriminates against children, particularly girls, as in several cases commanders mentioned names of family members, friends or relatives on the list in place of Children associated with Armed Forces and Groups (CAAFG) (Specht 2009:206-207).

In other situations, commanders merely seized girls' ID cards selling them to someone else. In fact the commander's sincerity mattered a great deal. In certain cases, without the commander's encouragement, girls would not have enrolled for DDR. Commanders also helped out in tracing as well as accessing some of the girls. The UNICEF has shown concern as regards the unwillingness of commanders to mention children's names in demobilisation lists due to fear of damaging their reputation as well as facing political, social, and legal consequences. In fact, one general did allude to fear

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[88] Online Source

for his reputation as the primary cause 'for not listing the children in his unit'. Although, some social workers who were interviewed pointed out the issue was not that of commanders being humiliated but they were in fact prompted by the sum of Transitional Safety Allowance they could grasp from the DDR process (while adults were provided with cash, children were not) (Specht 2009:206-207).

Further, a frequent faux pas concerning DDR programmes has been the failure to acknowledge and address the well-established fact that many child soldiers do not enroll for formal DDR processes. Due to the fear of stigmatisation, thousands of child soldiers, especially girls, prefer not to disclose their identity as soldiers by enrolling for DDR. The problem can be exacerbated as a result of local dynamics. For instance, in the case of Colombia, restraining conditions for entering the government-run DDR programme have in effect led to the exclusion of many ex-child combatants, including many of those set free by their commanders or who fled, finding their own way home. In DRC, anecdotal evidence from 2007 hints that commanders dreading prosecution for recruitment of children abandoned some child combatants on the way to demobilisation centres. In addition, children who were engaged in fighting across borders are particularly vulnerable. For instance, of some 2,000 Guinean children who supposedly participated in the Liberian armed conflict just 29 were officially demobilised and repatriated to Guinea (CSC 2008).[89]

Even as the international community has formulated guidelines on the basis of lessons learned from formal DDR programmes in post-conflict environments, the situation of 'informal release of children during conflict' has received little attention and poses further difficulties concerning security, protection and the threat of re-recruitment. In the year 1999, an issue that emerged during a review mission for a reintegration programme of child soldiers in the DRC was 'Reintegration into what'? The conflict was continuing and recruitment of children was the main concern of warlords (Specht 2009:198).

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[89] Ibid

Conclusion

DDR process has paid little attention to reintegration, especially when compared with disarmament and demobilisation of former combatants. This is one of the major bottlenecks in the effective reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers since integrating them into civilian life with their families, communities as well as providing them with the means of earning a decent livelihood are imperative for human security, sustainable peace, development as well as effective governance.

The goals of social reintegration include extenuating the negative repercussions of armed conflict, encouraging human development, guaranteeing justice and reparation or recompense to address grievances, and improving security by dissuading future fighting. In the year 2007, 1.6 billion dollars were used up in formal DDR programmes with more than one million ex-combatants as participants—ninety percent of them in the African continent (Annan and Patel 2009:2). However, evaluation of DDR programmes in Afghanistan, Peru, Liberia and Sierra Leone point out serious limitations, such as systems that favour commanders, exclude women, and offer incentives or inducements for continuing in chains of command (Annan and Patel 2009:2).

In addition, another important issue is, to what degree should the child DDR programmes be distinct from and function independently of, adult DDR programmes? In countries such as Afghanistan, Liberia and Sudan, the UNDP's adult programmes and the UNICEF-led children's programmes are implemented in relative isolation. However, this may well lead to negative outcome for youth 'who find themselves on either side of the divide'. The key concerns of DDR for adults and DDR for children are rather diverse, and as the IDDRS states:

> Child DDR is not the same as that for adults ... rather, it is a specific process with its own requirements, several of which are fundamentally different from adult demobilisation programmes (Specht 2009:210-211).

Although, this must not imply that they operate in absolute isolation from each other. Specht notes, while working groups on DDR may facilitate coordination, quite frequently

agency competition, funding constraints as well as personality clashes have resulted in a lack of collaboration (Specht 2009:210-211).

On the positive side, IDDRS conceivably characterise the most refined understanding of DDR. One of the reasons for this is that it definitely attempts to go well beyond the (excessively) narrow focus on disarmament and demobilisation which has typified if not the idea, at least the practice of DDR for a long time (Greiff 2009:348). On the whole, it may be argued that the international community is making efforts to learn from the past DDR experiences as is evident from its incorporation of the human security agenda in the DDR processes such as Sierra Leone. However, much more needs to be done since there seems to be much gap between the importance of human security laid down in the human rights instruments on children and the ground reality of various DDR processes which claim to focus on the reintegration of former child soldiers.

Chapter 4

Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Child Soldiers in Mozambique

The official DDR process in Mozambique (early 1990s) was essentially adult-driven since it marginalised those former combatants who were below fifteen years of age. At that time according to the international community, soldiers below fifteen were considered children or 'child soldiers'. The focus of the DDR programme in the country was state security and human security concerns were sidelined. This chapter analyses the adult-driven DDR process as well as community-based rehabilitation programmes for child soldiers in post-conflict Mozambique (1992). It further aims to understand the impact of the exclusion of child soldiers from the DDR process. Before analysing the issue of human security and the DDR process in Mozambique, this chapter will give a glimpse of the armed conflict in the country.

The conflict between Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) in the 1980s and early 1990s was one of the bloodiest in African history. As a result of the conflict almost one million died, among these 45 percent were children. Three million were displaced internally while one-and-a-half million ended up as refugees in neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Swaziland and South Africa. The war ravaged the infrastructure, with medical facilities and schools systematically targeted by the rebels. Further, violence in Mozambique was rampant which included murder, rape, torture, amputation, and forced cannibalism (McKay and Mazurana 2004:32).

Background

It was in 1964, that Mozambicans embarked on their struggle against the Portuguese rule in Mozambique which was the only colonial power left in the African continent. The Portuguese government responded with killings and secret police infiltrations. In the aftermath of the 1974 coup d'état in Portugal, FRELIMO came to power in Mozambique. The departing colonists demolished buildings and infrastructure, slaughtered livestock,

and shoved equipment into the ocean, leaving the country impoverished (Wurst 1994:36). Soon the FRELIMO leadership was confronted with a guerilla war waged by the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) mostly known as RENAMO which received the support of South Africa and Rhodesia (Furley 1995:32).

In 1977, the armed conflict between FRELIMO (the government forces) and RENAMO (the rebels) broke out and continued for around fifteen years. However, during the post-independence phase, Mozambique did not experience the impact of RENAMO until after the creation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980. From the mid-1980s South Africa's destabilisation policies intensified in Mozambique (Dodge 1991: 57). However, due to internal reforms in South Africa to put an end to apartheid, former's support for RENAMO declined. This resulted in the weakening of RENAMO. Therefore, the likelihood of a political solution acquired strength in Mozambique.

In 1992 the war ended with a peace settlement, which was facilitated by peace talks and international mediation (Honwana 2003:62). On October 4, 1992, the FRELIMO and the RENAMO signed the General Peace Agreement (GPA) (Ball and Barnes 2000:159). On 13 Dec 1992, the U.N. Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ) was established by the Security Council (Wurst 1994:37). In November 1994, elections were held in the country and finally FRELIMO took control of the government. Contrary to the Angolan case, where an electoral defeat led the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to revive its insurgency, RENAMO in Mozambique accepted its position as the opposition party (Wurst 1997:17).

Child Recruitment

During the Mozambique conflict (1977–1992), for the first time the issue of recruitment of child soldiers or young people below eighteen years of age, was raised internationally. Here, in this case, FRELIMO publicly displayed boy soldiers from RENAMO forces. The international community responded with the development of programmes particularly for child soldiers, however, merely boys passed through these programmes.

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During the conflict in Mozambique, child soldiers became an extremely "hot issue", consequently neither RENAMO nor the FRELIMO government wanted to acknowledge using them. Accordingly alternative programmes were created to facilitate the release of child soldiers. Mozambique also offered an opportunity to assess and document the experiences of girls or young women who participated in the armed forces or militias. Mostly, the involvement of women in the armed forces or militias was reluctantly acknowledged by internationals, however the presence of girls was generally dismissed or denied as occasional. Post-conflict programmes, specifically for girls were not developed, and gender concerns in programmes for children were virtually absent. Girls received only few, if at all, benefits and years later they were struggling to make a living (McKay and Mazurana 2004:32).

During the armed conflict between the FRELIMO and RENAMO, both parties attempted to lure children and youth into their struggle by promising them scholarships which at times not just failed to materialise, but also caused the prospective scholar to become a direct combatant armed with an assault rifle instead of a pencil (McIntyre 2003). In Mozambique, children were recruited into the MNR through capture, coercion and brutal psychological and physical force (Dodge 1991:56). According to UNICEF, around 10,000 child soldiers were still being deployed by RENAMO's forces in 1988. Moreover, an indefinite number of children were integrated by force into the local paramilitary forces or "milicias populares," directed by FRELIMO. Moreover, scores of children were also recruited as soldiers in the state armed forces (Wamba and Mahony 2004:7). Children were employed as combatants, spies, intelligence agents, porters, slaves, and "wives" (McKay and Mazurana 2004:32).

RENAMO

With support from the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), RENAMO came into existence in 1977. The Rhodesian government was responsible for creating and sponsoring the RENAMO in reprisal for the FRELIMO's complete implementation of the sanctions authorised by the UN, above all its support for Zimbabwe National Liberation Army's (ZANLA) armed struggle for Zimbabwe's independence. Immediately

subsequent to Mozambique's independence in 1975, many Portuguese settlers in addition to previous members of the colonial armed forces in the country who opposed FRELIMO's policies left for Rhodesia. For the Rhodesian security services this offered 'a recruiting pool for founding members of RENAMO'. In the beginning the RENAMO was entirely reliant on Rhodesia and was meant to serve a dual purpose: firstly, assisting the Rhodesian forces to carry out operations inside Mozambique against ZANLA, mostly through intelligence gathering; secondly, to put into practice the agenda of the aggrieved Portuguese settlers who desired to dethrone the "communist" (FRELIMO) government of Mozambique. Consequently, at first RENAMO had few local roots and initially its mentors chose to keep the military wing distinct from its political wing, which was just about entirely under the control of white Portuguese-speaking Mozambicans (Honwana 2003:65-66).

As Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980 subsequent to the Lancaster House agreements, the Rhodesian support was no longer available to RENAMO. However, it came under the tutelage of South African Security Forces as well as some groups in the West. While the outside support helped RENAMO make considerable military progress, its ideological and political project remained extremely weak. To cope with this concern, RENAMO made attempts at harnessing popular support within Mozambique by employing a traditionalist approach, which worked towards filling the void caused by FRELIMO's rejection of traditional chiefs in addition to cultural and traditional religious values and practices. This in turn helped RENAMO build local support among sections of the peasant population (Honwana 2003:65-66). By the mid-1980s RENAMO was active throughout the country and had become notorious for its recruitment of child soldiers.

Large segment of the rural population helped in spreading the rebel (RENAMO) movement due to their alienation from the FRELIMO government 'by its forced collectivisation of the countryside', religious persecution, and the elimination of traditional chiefs. All ethnic groups and regions in central and northern Mozambique supported RENAMO as they felt sidelined or marginalised by the dominance of people from south within the FRELIMO government. It was in the 1960s during the freedom

struggle that the regional divisions inside FRELIMO had emerged, however, historically their roots can be said to go back much earlier. RENAMO's electoral successes during the elections in 1994 and 1999, when the opposing party got a majority of votes in most northern and central provinces have eventually confirmed that the rebel movement has always had substantial regional support (Seibert 2003:276).

Child Recruitment by RENAMO

RENAMO was notorious for the recruitment of child soldiers who were frequently abducted and forced to train as combatants. Reportedly, RENAMO recruited ten or twelve year olds from refugee camps in the neighbouring Malawi which was accused by the FRELIMO government of aiding RENAMO. It purposely targeted children to train them with the most dreadful and brutal techniques, which led to it earning the title of the 'Khmer Rouge of Africa' (Furley 1995:32). In one instance the RENAMO took 100 children into its custody from a school in Cambine, southern Mozambique (Furley 1995:32).

Human Rights Watch notes, ex-child soldiers who were interviewed during the period 1990-1992, recounted their experiences of abduction and training by RENAMO. The rebel movement engaged in recruiting young people in all areas; however especially wherever there was a dearth of adult men. It was in the south that reports of recruitment of children below fifteen by RENAMO forces were most common, where the traditional labour migration to the neighbouring South Africa had meant a scarcity of adult males. According to the reports children were instructed and trained in rebel campsites such as Matsequenha. Children reportedly did not complain much and followed orders. One person interviewed by Human Rights Watch (HRW) explained, young boys could be turned into particularly good fighters (HRW 1996:14).

The process of turning the young person into a soldier and making him or her a part of the RENAMO forces took place through a direct encounter between RENAMO and the young people and their families or was interceded by local chiefs. As far as southern Mozambique was concerned the latter was perhaps less frequent, though there

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exist reports of local chiefs who backed the government or the rebels. Yet, the extent of their direct involvement in recruiting child combatants is unclear. While, in other areas (central and northern region) of Mozambique, reportedly, there existed stronger link between the rebels and traditional authorities (Honwana 2002).

To close probable avenues of resistance from the child's communities, armed groups may purposely wipe out the bonds of trust between the child and the community. For instance, during the conflict in Mozambique, RENAMO compelled boy enlistees to slay someone from their own village (Wessells 1997:35). A characteristic RENAMO recruitment practice entailed coercing new child enlistees into killing someone known to these children.

In fact, in several cases RENAMO compelled children into killing either their mother or father or a relative so as to sever their ties with the community, binding them to the movement through guilt and shame. Further, reportedly child soldiers were made to smoke a concoction of *soruma* or marijuana and gunpowder in order to enhance their physical strength and courage. Child units were mainly engaged in attacks on non-combatants and in looting raids 'on local communities to provide bases with supplies'. They were seldom involved in direct combat with FRELIMO. Most young people were kidnapped in the south of the country where the rebels were less entrenched among the local people. Further, an attempt to flee would prove dangerous since RENAMO retaliated with instantaneous execution and abducted children and men were generally taken to far-off training camps to avoid escape. Besides, the fear of punishment by the government following their return daunted the captives from absconding from RENAMO camps (Seibert 2003: 255-256).

However, Schafer observes, while previous writing on the conflict focused on psychological brutalisation tactics and physical coercion by RENAMO to produce desocialised killing machines, however, oral accounts by ex-fighters revealed a process of re-socialisation wherein they attempted to retain links with their previous lives and adhere to their moral values as far as possible. Particularly the young soldiers' attachment

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to family in addition to the belief in patriarchal structures was upheld through their own actions as well as the manipulation of the leadership. The depiction of the guerilla leaders as father figures responded to a psychological requirement for the recruits, in addition to becoming an instrument of military mobilisation. RENAMO used the notion of the patriarchal structure to build analogies with local moral conventions and avoid alienating both combatants and civilians, to be in control of combatants and instill compliance, to validate its fight politically to the enlistees, and to forbid relationships between female and male combatants. FRELIMO also indulged in portraying its leaders as father figures, to garner the same sort of obedience and devotion from its enlistees, who were reluctant and skeptical of the rationalisation of the conflict (Schafer 2005:100-101).

Furthermore, in some areas of Mozambique many young people were drawn to RENAMO, particularly because of the crisis existing in the countryside. A number of young people migrated to town, however unable to get work; they got back to rural areas. The Operacao Producao in 1984 sent back those who were regarded as "unproductive" to the rural areas. These returned young people were now unable to fit into local structures and the unappealing life of the countryside. RENAMO offered these disconnected youth 'a different purpose in life' by handing them a gun (Honwana 2002). RENAMO in Mozambique persistently denied using children throughout the war. However, when the conflict came to an end, many of its soldiers during demobilisation parades were in fact children; there was one sixteen year old who was involved in combat since he was just eight (Singer 2006:145).

FRELIMO

FRELIMO was established in 1963 when three key nationalist groups combined forces and elected Eduardo Mondlane, an anthropologist, as its first president. It was under Samora Machel who headed the party after Mondlane's death that FRELIMO acquired a more militant character (Bartoli 2002:363). The original FRELIMO was essentially a mass movement for all those who were opposed to Portuguese rule and fascism (Hanlon 1984: 138). FRELIMO has a history of sustaining a wide-ranging support. During the 1960s at the time of the

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anti-colonialism struggle, FRELIMO received aid from China as well as the Soviet Union. During the 1990s, it became part of the British Commonwealth as well as the Portuguese CPLP (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa) (Hanlon 2007:9).

It was in 1977 that FRELIMO formally adopted Marxism-Leninism, and the same year it also went on to sign 'a twenty-year treaty of cooperation and friendship with the Soviet Union'. Even though it intended to be non-aligned, the FRELIMO government's proximity with the Soviet Union indicated a clear inclination towards the communist "camp". While the west began to distance itself from Mozambique, the latter grew more reliant on Eastern Europe in addition to the Soviet Union for military and economic aid and more acerbic in its rhetoric against the west (Reed 1996:278).

Child Recruitment by FRELIMO

Ana Leão notes, much of what's written on child combatants during the armed conflict in Mozambique perpetuates misinformation. FRELIMO, officially, never recruited child combatants and therefore muted those young people's voices who spent their youth fighting and later struggled to survive. This supposed non-existence of child combatants in FRELIMO forces has been so resolutely embedded in literature as well as in people's psyche that when ex-child combatants were being interviewed, those children who had been enlisted by FRELIMO argued '...we are not child soldiers; we were only recruited under age'. They were resolute in their thinking that merely those who had been recruited by RENAMO were child combatants. Further, it has not been acknowledged that some (under recruitment age) youth voluntarily joined RENAMO, mainly to escape forced recruitment or since they were assured opportunities that they were denied by the government in power. FRELIMO did engage in forced recruitment. Children or young people were enlisted if they were considered 'to be big enough to hold a gun'. Students showed interest in scholarships abroad, but eventually ended up in 'military academies in the host countries', rather than the promised universities. Others were enticed into joining special national training courses or programmes, which also happened to be military training (Leão 2004:40-41).

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Leão notes, students in Mozambique and abroad could only receive their schooling certificates once they had completed their military service, which, according to Leão's sample, 'could last between two and sixteen years, or even longer' (Leão 2004:41). Rosen also points out, FRELIMO regularly employed children as soldiers (Rosen 2005:13-14). FRELIMO did not just frequently organise raids to abduct young males for military service, it also engaged in forcible recruitment of children, although to a lesser extent than RENAMO (Seibert 2003:256).

Peace Process in Mozambique

One of the earliest peace-building missions took place in Mozambique. On December 16, 1992, the Security Council Resolution 797 launched one of the most comprehensive and ambitious missions carried out by the UN up till that time- The UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). Its mandate encompassed humanitarian, military, political, as well as electoral responsibilities not just for the conciliation or pacification of a war-shattered state but 'for its transformation from a single party state to a multiparty democracy' as well (Ajello and Wittmann 2004: 437). Like El Salvador and Namibia, in Mozambique too, the UN was the impartial facilitator in dealing with the process, and it got involved and mediated at the time when the demobilisation process was at risk or showed delays (Kingma 2001:412). Initially conceived to last for twelve months, the mandate of the ONUMOZ was later extended to November 15, 1994 and ended on January 31, 1995. According to the peace agreement there would not be any truth commission, and therefore no punishments or penalties would be given for crimes committed during the conflict (Shillington 2005: 1043). The peace agreement espoused a new integrated army comprising 30, 000 men, half from each side, however, just 12, 000 of the demobilised decided on joining the army (Shillington 2005:1043).

Actors in the Peace Process

Realising that the conflict between FRELIMO and RENAMO could not be resolved through military means, from 1988 efforts were made by the Catholic Church, forces in civil society, various religious groups and certain individuals, to build contacts with and instigate negotiations between the government and the rebels. In 1992 a peace accord was

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finally signed between the FRELIMO government and the RENAMO forces through the intercession or mediation of the Italian Government and the Catholic Church (Lundin 1998:105). The Mozambique conflict demonstrates several different roles that informal or non-official organisations can perform: facilitator, communicator, and mediator. However, this is an atypical case and instances of direct intercession by nonofficial groups are rather infrequent (Crocker et al. 2004:66).

The Mozambique case also underscores the significance of collaboration among major third parties. For instance, in the case of Mozambique, the governments of major powers, neighbouring states as well as Sant' Egidio had an interest in resolving the Mozambique conflict. In Mozambique, the same supportive relations between third parties, this time among the UN and the key states, typified the peace implementation phase (Crocker et al. 2004:71).

Civil Society

In Mozambique, sections of civil society contributed vigorously with actions and programmes to maintain peace. A case in point is the management of the Christian Council of Mozambique which developed and executed a programme to convert 'weapons into ploughshares (or hoes)'. Further, this plan contributed to decreasing the number of arms in the service of crime in the southern part of Mozambique, in addition to encouraging members from different communities to disclose the existence of arms caches (Lundin 1998:114).

NGOs are known to have played a significant role during the disarmament process in Mozambique as people became aware that weapons given to them would finally be obliterated (while it was dreaded that weapons handed over to the police would be simply resold for profit). Therefore, local communities placed ammunition, light weapons, and landmines by the roadside when they were aware that mine clearance groups or humanitarian organisations were close by (Spear 2002:154-155).

Role of the Religion and Church

The churches have played a central role in the Mozambique peace process. Besides a Catholic lay-missionary society which hosted the formal negotiations, various Catholic as well as Protestant churches and organisations have been significantly influential in the manner in which the people in Mozambique and rest of the world saw each other and the need and manner in which the armed conflict would be settled. The churches have been pivotal in real peace-building on the ground (Vines and Wilson 1995: 130).

Religion had a role to play in motivating major actors in the accessibility of resources via network of religious bodies, and in the style and overall vision of the peace process, particularly during its two years and six months at the Sant' Egidio Community headquarters. The endeavor proved successful since these components were drawn together amicably 'in the design and implementation of peace as a political process'. Put differently, the political disposition of the peace process did not undergo transformation as a result of the religious elements, but it was basically enriched by them (Bartoli 2002:362).

External Actors

External actors played an important role in Mozambique's negotiation process and its war-to-peace transition. The peace negotiations were hosted by the Italian government and were observed by Mozambique's key donors, particularly the USA, Britain, Germany and Portugal. Italy played a major role in arranging the peace negotiations and was set to take the lead in funding its implementation. Prior to and during the negotiation process, donors, in particular, the group of like-minded donors, in addition to the U.S., worked closely with both parties to offer political guidance and support in preparation for the transition stage. The General Peace Agreement (GPA) granted the UN and bilateral donors explicit roles for the implementation and monitoring of the peace accords. During the period 1992-1994, UNOMOZ and international donors had important roles to play in the implementation of the GPA (Manning and Malbrough 2009:81).

Manning and Malbrough point out a number of factors that have led to Mozambique's success. These include the involvement of the UNOMOZ from 1992-94, longstanding relations between the Mozambican government and the important donors who played a prominent role in the transition to peace, the ramifications of regional and distant international events, and the choices of the leaders of the warring parties. Further, another important factor was the presence of a feasible state structure, which proved capable of fulfilling the promises made during the negotiation process. This state capacity was significantly strengthened and facilitated by donor support during the years preceding the peace accord. The UN mission has been praised for the successful outcome of the Mozambican peace process. Manning and Malbrough further argue, the UN was critical in administering the truce and providing an all-encompassing official framework within which the peace process was executed, however, the success of the process mainly depended upon responsive and flexible interventions by bilateral donors who got involved to supplement the resources and mandate of the UNOMOZ. Although less noticeable, but equally significant, was the impact that many of these donors had on boosting the confidence and capacity of the government of Mozambique in the years preceding the peace accord (Manning and Malbrough 2009:78).

Barnes also points to the role of donors in the successful transition to peace. He states, considering that on the average an annual amount of $ 1 billion flowed into the country for emergency as well as development assistance between 1990 and 1995, it is imperative to look at the role played by the governmental authorities and the international donor community (UN agencies, bilateral donors) 'in the definition of aid priorities and the implementation of programmes.' Even though it was apparent that there was a clear-cut movement 'from government-led coordination (early eighties) of aid to donor-driven programmes (early nineties)', the government of Mozambique managed to maintain enough sovereignty as well as state authority to influence the content and shape of the aid packages (Barnes 1998:27).

DDR and Human Security

The Peace Agreement in Mozambique comprised a DDR programme that envisioned the achievement of demobilisation and disarmament in eighteen months. UN observes, the programme gave much importance to disarmament and demobilisation rather than the social and cultural reintegration (UN 2005:19). Consequently, state security was given precedence over human security.

Disarmament

Disarmament experienced problems such as the lack of trustworthy information regarding the number of troops involved in both RENAMO and FRELIMO. RENAMO's force's strength was projected to be somewhere between 11,000 and 13,000 while the FRELIMO's was projected to be several times the size of RENAMO's force. Though, in the closing stages of demobilisation over 92,000 former soldiers went through the process; around 70,500 on the FRELIMO's side and over 21,000 from RENAMO's forces. According to estimates, between 1.5 million and 6 million ammunitions and small arms had been dispersed in the country yet just 200,000 ammunitions and light arms were collected by the UN Operation in Mozambique by the end of its mandate in 1995, of which around 24,000 were destroyed (UN 2005:19).

In Mozambique, within the ONUMOZ mandate, guidelines regarding what comprised disarmament were not present and how to reach this end was also not elucidated. The manner in which the mandate was phrased, it would appear that the process of disarmament was more or less completely included in the definition of demobilisation. One of the effects of these silences, not considering why they were constructed, is that the responsibility lies with the implementers to choose how to move forward. The specifics of the peace accord can be viewed as a top limit for action or a base from which agents can proceed to implement their understanding of the intent of the accords. In the Mozambican case, a number of ONUMOZ personnel considered disarmament as the central element of the peace agreement acting accordingly (Spear 2002:148-149).

Norma J. Kriger observes, when demobilisation is viewed as comprising disarmament, Borges Coelho and Vines consider the case of UN-administered demobilistion in Mozambique a success. Some years later Vines describes demobilisation as separate from disarmament, and asserts that disarmament during the peace settlement in Mozambique was a failure. Above all, he levels criticism against the UN mandate for not making a distinction between demobilisation and disarmament, for not elucidating what disarmament must involve, and for not offering criteria for the success of disarmament. He suggests his preferred criteria. 'For ONUMOZ to have disarmed all armed individuals' would have been an impracticable task, however the weapons it did get hold of and which were set aside for decommissioning could have been destroyed (Kriger 2003:18-19). In Mozambique, complete disarmament did not take place and soldiers engaged in selling their arms to dealers who directed them into the townships of South Africa, resulting in the intensification of violence in civil disputes such as the 'taxi wars' (Spear 2006:65).

Demobilisation

The demobilisation programmes eventually funded by the international community ended up being deficient in the benefits declared to the troops, leading to the resentment among those awaiting demobilisation. Moreover, the sluggishness of the financial support in turn delayed the commencement of the demobilisation process, slowing the peace process and protracting the international peacekeeping operation by a year. However, downsising in the country was successfully completed in 1994 (Marley 1997).[90]

Demobilisation of Child Soldiers

The demobilisation and reintegration of over 80,000 soldiers was perhaps the most remarkable achievement of ONUMOZ (Ajello and Wittmann 2004: 445). Sixty six thousand soldiers were demobilised by FRELIMO while RENAMO demobilised around 24, 000 adult combatants and 12, 000 child combatants, according to the UN (Shillington 2005:1043). However, an unknown number of "child soldiers" (below fifteen years of age) were intentionally left out of the demobilisation process in Mozambique. There is no

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[90] Online Source

precise data on the number of young people below the age of eighteen who served in the forces of RENAMO or FRELIMO during the armed conflict in the country, although their number is widely thought to be somewhere in the thousands.

According to the technical unit of the UN mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), 27 percent (about 25, 498) of the soldiers who were present for demobilisation were younger than eighteen when the demobilisation process was formally initiated in 1994. However, child soldiers below fifteen, who fought the war for many years, could not be considered soldiers under International Law, according to the Geneva Conventions. Underage combatants seeking facilities under demobilisation schemes were not given the same benefits as regular soldiers and were instead referred to NGOs, such as the International Committee for the Red Cross and Save the Children Alliance (Honwana 2005:137).

When the conflict came to an end, Accion Sociale, Mozambique government's demobilising agency, concluded that there were just 850 children below the age of fifteen remaining in the RENAMO's forces, of whom 574 were identified and referred for rehabilitation (Maslen 1997:20). Save the Children Federation (US) pointed out, prior to the 1992 peace accord, it worked with around 2,000 child combatants; 850 were present in RENAMO bases at the time of demobilisation in 1994; while an additional 6,000, communities reported, had returned spontaneously when the rebels allowed them to go at the time of the peace process. These 6,000 children were mostly domestic help and porters, while the 850 found in RENAMO bases until the demobilisation process were probably soldiers. These 850 children found in nineteen RENAMO bases were moved to twelve transit centres (three in government-administered areas while nine in rebel or RENAMO controlled regions) 'in seven provinces in a joint SCF/UNICEF/Red Cross project' before reintegration assistance and reunification with their families (wherever this was achievable). Most children had been abducted during the period 1988-1990 and had stayed in the bases for many years; only a few had been kidnapped after the initiation of the peace negotiations (Maslen 1997:20-21).

Reintegration

DDR programme in Mozambique gave precedence to disarmament and demobilisation over reintegration. And even in the case of reintegration, psychological aspect was neglected especially when compared to economic reintegration. Military security was the overriding concern of the DDR planners. As mentioned previously, child soldiers below the age of fifteen were excluded from the DDR programme and former girl soldiers were neglected. This in turn threatened human security.

In Mozambique, much emphasis was laid on economic reintegration and occupational skills and training programmes were developed, however, little was done officially to deal with the psychological requirement of the former soldiers, and prepare them to enter civilian life. Further, peace accords do not offer a complete basis for reconciliation, which is apparently not regarded as an "essential" component of peacekeeping mechanisms. However, it is important to bear in mind that Mozambique is a community state 'where social order within community life and between neighbouring communities' is imperative for the social reproduction of the existing form of life; and reconciliation and healing subsequent to a conflict, between individuals, communities, and social groups, is not just important but essential (Lundin 1998:105-106).

Regardless of the shortcomings in the official reintegration programmes, individuals and communities contributed to the post-conflict rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants. In Mozambique, where no official truth commission existed, Alcinda Honwana has dealt with the influence of local beliefs and notions of self on approaches to healing. Traditionally in Mozambique, illness, including mental health, exceeds 'the control of an individual', and could lead to the involvement of both the family and the community. The spirits of the deceased may also hold an important place in the healing of the individual. Likewise, there is this conception of 'social pollution', where those who have perpetrated killings during the conflict become polluted, and thus become potential conduits for spirits of the deceased to enter and bring about suffering on themselves, their families and even their communities (Marshall 2007:148-149).

Therefore, 'rehumanisation' or cleansing processes which traditional healers perform are crucial for the protection of community and reintegration of those drawn in the conflict. Since many Mozambicans believe that talking about experiences of trauma may lead malicious humans and spirits to return, these practices or rituals may not entail verbal expression of the trauma, and instead re-emphasise the leaving behind of traumatic experiences symbolically and the creation of a ritual transformation in status from anarchism to social conformance. According to research, in such societies healing rituals seem to work with victims much more than talk therapy. These healing practices and reinstatement of harmony are effective since they are carried out within a wider milieu of family, community and the spirit realm, in tune with cultural notions regarding health and self. These notions and beliefs are more common in rural areas, which were most badly hit by the conflict, but are nonetheless still consonant in urban areas. The refusal to talk about the conflict and past atrocities was seen across classes, and truth mechanisms were categorically rejected. Subsequent to the truce and lacking a truth mechanism, one possible factor in Mozambique's swift and widespread reconciliation was the lasting strength of traditional approaches to healing (Marshall 2007:149).

Reintegration of Child Soldiers

The official DDR programme in Mozambique lacked mechanisms for reintegration of those former combatants who were below fifteen years of age. In 1995 the US Department of State reported, the Government did not make 'children's rights and welfare a priority'. And little attempt was made to reintegrate large numbers of child combatants who were involved in the RENAMO and the government forces or assuage the situation of the rising numbers of street children in urban areas, many of whom lost their parents or families as a result of the conflict. During the year, the rebels (RENAMO) began to give the ICRC in addition to other NGOs better access to child soldiers in its forces, some of whom had been coerced into being combatants. Of the 3,500 children who had been in the custody of the rebels (RENAMO), around 500 had been employed as combatants. At the end of the year, all but a minority of problem cases (where parents were either dead or

could not accept their children) had been settled, and the ICRC declared plans to end its operation (US Department of State 1995).[91]

UN notes, demobilisation of child combatants took place at separate centers where they were given special attention. Efforts at reuniting families were successful. Female ex-combatants who experienced sexual abuse were provided with psycho-social support and reunited with their families (UN 2005). However, it is important to note that children under the age of fifteen, who were to be involved in programmes by humanitarian agencies such as Children and War Project (CWP), were unhappy with their exclusion from the formal DDR process. Consequently, a group of RENAMO child combatants (below fifteen) staged a revolt in the headquarters of RENAMO in Maputo and overwhelmed RENAMO leaders (Honwana 2006: 139). The CWP and the ICRC offered to provide these children basic livelihood goods.

The Children and War programme was successful in reunifying these children with their families, however, providing effective follow-up support was a big challenge. Given the lack of publicly provided services, most children were left to fend for themselves. Some were successful, while others ended up as street children or drifted into criminal groups (Honwana 2005:140). However, the Mozambican case is considered a success in terms of reintegrating large numbers of ex-child soldiers through the community-based and local healing methods. In 2001, as regards the reintegration of ex-combatants, the government informed the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that western style psychological treatment 'did not fit the traditional African perspective on the interpretation of trauma, and thus caused the rejection of families or the stigmatisation of children assisted by these programmes', whereas treatment and healing by traditional healers encouraged reintegration (CSC 2004).[92]

Reconciliation and forgiveness are both part of Africa's cultural heritage. Therefore, unsurprisingly, these concepts were being recovered and strengthened in

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[91] Online Source
[92] Child Soldier Coalition Online Source

Mozambique. To commemorate the first anniversary of the peace accord in 1993, those religious leaders who were involved in instigating the peace process, being aware of the significance of the concept of reconciliation, organised an ecumenical service in public in the two key cities – Beira and Maputo. In addition, the Churches organised "peace education programmes" which took place at community level. However, the most important activities were those arranged by the communities themselves. As part of former combatants' reception, the communities carried out rituals of reintegration in places where these individuals opted to settle down. These rituals aimed at reconciling the ex-combatant in three stages: firstly, with her/himself, to rid the spirit of conflict and violence 'from the heart and soul' of the former combatant, a type of exorcism to recondition the ex-soldier socially and psychologically; next, with the community and community life; and finally, with her/his former enemies (Lundin 1998:107).

There were community methods of reintegration in both rural and urban areas, with specific features for different localities and regions. At all places these mechanisms functioned autonomously, as 'cultural elements of reintegration' dispensing with financial support from outside the community. According to the evidence these methods or mechanisms seemed to work better in rural areas than urban centres (Lundin 1998:107).

In 2004 a study of ex-child combatants in the country was reported to have found that they were:

> As much integrated as the rest of the population and did not seem to have any problem specific to the group. They felt respected by their families and communities and many belonged to either a religious or community group. Most children had never seen a psychologist or a social worker (CSC 2004).[93]

However, reportedly former girl combatants were frequently neglected during the integration process. Young women and girls who were forced into sexual slavery or exploited as slave labour in both government and RENAMO's fighting forces had frequently been excluded from reintegration programmes for former soldiers. In fact, in

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[93] Ibid

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some cases, these programmes allowed the continuance of human rights abuses, such as leaving these girls and young women in the custody of those men who had kidnapped them during the conflict (CSC 2004).[94] The segment on girl soldiers discusses their demobilisation and reintegration at length.

The Lhanguene Rehabilitation Center for Child Soldiers

During the period 1988-2004, information was prospectively gathered on 39 male ex-child combatants in Mozambique. The research commenced in Maputo at the Lhanguene Rehabilitation Center, continued after the reintegration of subjects into their families and communities, while concluding in a study in 2004 to learn how these ex-child combatants were now doing as adults. Journalistic accounts in 1988 and 1990 termed Mozambique's children "future barbarians" and a "lost generation". However, Boothby et al. assert, their research demonstrates that this is far from true. They continue, in fact, the huge majority of the group of ex-child combatants who were followed for around sixteen years had grown to be capable, caring and productive adults. Very few carried on with their violent behaviour, or are so distressed that they have not been able to come to terms with their lives. At the same time, none of these ex-child combatants are really liberated from their pasts. They continue to fight back psychological distress connected with their experiences. Their study also identified particular interventions that were vital in facilitating substantial reintegration and recovery of these ex-child combatants (Boothby et al. 2008:239).

However, Honwana is quite critical of the Lhanguene Rehabilitation Center. She states, when the armed hostilities ended most child combatants were moved to demobilisation centres. The Red Cross as well as other international and local organisations helped in reuniting many children with their relatives and families or placed them in foster care. The very first child combatants who came from the rebel camps were placed in a recovery centre in town, with a group of child psychologists working with them. In Honwana's view, this experience turned out to be unsuccessful since these children were completely disconnected from both their cultural environment and

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[94] Ibid

communities and were also asked to verbalise their excruciating past as part of their healing and recovery. She maintains, western psychological approaches frequently employ such practices. Western understandings and definitions of childhood, of trauma and distress, and of healing and diagnosis were employed in a society that embraces extremely different ontologies and socio-cultural patterns (Honwana 2002).

Honwana asserts, in other socio-cultural context much emphasis is laid on the role of the ancestral spirits in addition to other spiritual forces in the course 'of causation and healing of mental health problem'. Further, in contrast to modern western psychology, not just the individual but the collective body is taken into account. According to this perspective, if the focus is merely on the individual then this would undermine the efforts of family and community to participate in the healing process. Similarly, in Mozambique, research on healing war trauma has demonstrated that recollecting the distressing experience through verbalisation, for the purpose of healing it, is not always effective. In several cases people would not look back or speak about the past, they would rather start afresh following certain ritual practices, which do not essentially entail verbalisation of the affliction (Honwana 2002).

DDR of Girl Soldiers

In Mozambique, DDR programmes gave priority to peace and security issues, this in turn led to giving precedence to male combatants over females and gender concerns. Since female soldiers are not directly considered a major security hazard, they are generally excluded from the DDR programmes; this was seen in the case of Sierra Leone, Mozambique, and several other states (Bouta et al. 2005:17). Females as well as some males who performed support roles were frequently excluded from the demobilisation process (Bouta et al. 2005:14).

Those implementing DDR in Mozambique adopted gender-sensitive language; nevertheless, this was a top-down imposition leading to 'ad hoc and informal attention to gender at the level of implementation' (Ollek 2007: 41). Most of the females associated with RENAMO and FRELIMO were either abandoned or forced to accompany their

"husbands" in the reintegration process. Financial shortages and problems in accessing supplies resulted in the delay of the DDR process which in turn contributed to insecurity at cantonment sites. The peacekeeping orientation of the ONUMOZ focused more on immediate security concerns over long-term development (Ollek 2007: 40).

Moreover, in the case of Mozambique, based on the 'male breadwinner' logic, demobilisation programmes did not include female former combatants. They were not provided with adequate demobilisation package. Also demobilised female combatants were not informed or were not included in encampment of former soldiers. A small number of small-scale training programmes for female former soldiers also underpinned gender stereotypes by imparting secretarial and sewing skills. Consequently, this strengthened pre-existing gender disparity. High male unemployment led to the demobilisation programme encouraging females to become house wives to assist their husbands find work in formal sectors. Moreover, during the post war negotiations *Regulos* (local male chiefs) dominated the dialogue. Secondary status of gender concerns and dearth of gender-sensitive programmes in post war processes prevented females from taking part in formal reconstruction processes. The Peace agreement (1992) failed to acknowledge rape and did not prosecute rape as a human rights violation of women. Also, the accord never acknowledged female former soldiers. Although women's organisation, through civic education, worked towards encouraging females to cast their vote during the first democratic elections (1994), there was no communal or institutional support to wipe out discrimination against females in communities as well as in the electoral monitoring process (Nakamura 2004:10-11).

Similarly, when the conflict ended in Mozambique, even though girls comprised 40 percent of the minors at first documented at the rebel (RENAMO) camps, 'the great absence in many programmes are were the girls'. Reportedly, some girls who yearned to reunite with their families were forced into staying with their RENAMO partner or 'husband' or leave with him to his house even though *Lobolo* or traditional marriage had not taken place. Further, according to reports some women and girls were abandoned by their so called RENAMO "husbands" at the time of demobilisation (McKay and

Mazurana 2003:34-35). The DDR programme in Mozambique thus illustrates the lack of gender and human security concerns.

In Mozambique, females were believed to be more receptive than males to new values and army discipline, and therefore more compliant and easier to instruct and train. Yet, the fact that the warring parties have valued females must not obscure the truth that many females, like several males do not join armies voluntarily, especially irregular armies (Bouta et al. 2005:13). Further, in Mozambique, many females joined the army at quite an early age, therefore 'they had little education or work experience' (Bouta et al. 2005:27). In 1994, AMODEG, a veterans' organisation, created a women's branch since only issues concerning men were being tackled, and embarked on lobbying for equal rights for female former combatants. It dealt with following issues- specific economic reintegration courses for females, proper clothing for females, women's entitlement to resettlement allowances, psychological support for females as well as males, and the idea that ex-combatants should be regarded as a heterogeneous group which includes men, women, young people or children, and disabled soldiers (Bouta et al. 2005:30). A peace organisation called PROPAZ established by ex-combatants, stated that the veterans' association failed to address issues pertinent to female fighters and there was a need for independent associations for these women (CSC 2004).[95]

Challenges faced by DDR in Mozambique

DDR process in Mozambique faced many challenges such as ONUMOZ's short-term focus, former combatants' low education levels, the unwillingness of many former combatants to go back to their rural communities, the unremitting flow of a great number of arms and ammunitions as well as financial constraints that resulted in 'the formation of a smaller integrated army' (11,000 rather than the 30,000 agreed) (UN 2005:20).

A major problem in Mozambique's (1992-94) DDR process, was that the RENAMO, the government, and individual combatants, clandestinely established weapons caches outside the disarmament programme. Weapons caches in Mozambique

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[95] Ibid

(in addition to Zimbabwe and Swaziland) have been responsible for fuelling regional arms trafficking, and crime including armed criminality in cities of South Africa. However, regional co-operation, through South African technical assistance in particular and cooperation with the police force of Mozambique and SADC helped in the exposure of caches as well as the destruction of armaments that would otherwise have encouraged crime and violence in the region. During the latest stage of Operation Rachel the Mozambican police collected information on weapons caches. Regional cooperation in addition to developing the competence of the police is critical to addressing specific problems of weapons caches and to 'broader PCR and governance goals' (Ginifer et al. 2004:8).

Further, despite the success of Mozambique's peace process, UNOMOZ encountered many of the similar problems which less successful operations experienced elsewhere. Jett states, UNOMOZ achieved 'the key elements of its mission. It was not an unqualified success, however, as will be seen by a closer look at how it operated and how well it went about fulfilling its many and varied responsibilities'. One particularly difficult aspect of UNOMOZ the way it was originally planned was the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, which was meant to be supervised by the UNOHAC. But the UNOHAC's excessive bureaucratic obstructions, heavy infrastructures, and sluggish, rigid approaches to humanitarian aid exasperated donors. This resulted in the donors questioning the long-term approach of UNOHAC to humanitarian assistance, for which no mandate existed. Therefore, as Jett states, rather than the UNOHAC, donors and NGOs themselves took the lead in the redesigning and implementation of demobilisation and reintegration programmes. Manning and Malbrough note, in Mozambique, the success of DDR which is integral to peace process, cannot be credited to UNOMOZ alone (Manning and Malbrough 2009:84).

Moreover, UNICEF found it extremely problematic to determine the accurate age of the children, however, it supposed that most had been abducted at between eight and twelve years of age. UNICEF maintained that the children did not generally show signs of trauma. Nevertheless, a pilot project on trauma counselling was set up in Gaza

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provinces and the capital Maputo by an NGO called Associação Moçambicana de Saúde Pública (AMOSAPU), involving several mental health practitioners. Qualified Mozambicans were employed in the project to provide counselling and psychological support to 75 young people, some of them former child combatants. According to UNICEF the project was made untenable over the long term as a result of the use of extremely educated staff and the limited number of children assisted and it was also incapable of replication across the country (Maslen 1997:24).

Further, from the human security perspective the official DDR process in Mozambique cannot be regarded as a success. As mentioned previously, disarmament and demobilisation were given precedence over reintegration. In 2005, the UN reported, reintegration which is a long-term process was not given high priority and it became more difficult due to former soldiers' low education levels. Skills development activities were made available to the former soldiers, however, just 7,700 could benefit from such activities (UN 2005:20). Child soldiers (those who were below fifteen years of age) were left out of the demobilisation process. Girl soldiers were marginalised.

Glenn Oosthuysen (1998) argues, in Mozambique, there seemed to be an increase in the occurrence of armed crime. Most sources blamed the large number of jobless, but armed, demobilised combatants for it. The disappointment of former combatants even became apparent in riots and strikes in Maputo, when they demanded greater government support. According to Oosthuysen, during the late '90s, this objective could perhaps 'form the basis of an armed campaign to' pressurise the government to agree to their demands. In rural areas wandering groups of armed bandits got into looting and robbery, taking advantage of the poor state of policing. Oosthuysen further stated in 1998, the tensions between the FRELIMO and RENAMO, particularly in RENAMO supporters' dominated provinces which are however under the control of a provincial governor appointed by FRELIMO, are likely to erupt at any time. In 1998 there were a huge number of armaments in the country to transform any such enmity into armed conflict (Oosthuysen 1998:79).

Moreover, the 1992 peace settlement between the FRELIMO and RENAMO managed to end the conflict, but it failed to address its root cause. Peace is not possible if the roots of the conflict continue to exist. In post-conflict Mozambique, there still existed tensions concerning issues such high unemployment among former combatants (most former soldiers who were given training were unable to find employment in that sector); no provision of providing pensions to RENAMO soldiers in contrast to the FRELIMO government forces; and the failure to offer reintegration benefits or assistance to governmental and paramilitary militia fighters.

Conclusion

The UN's mission in Mozambique is considered a huge peacekeeping success (Fortna 2008:48). The UN and many international observers considered the DDR as well as 'the larger UN peacekeeping mission successful (McKay and Mazurana 2003:32). In Mozambique, Sant'Egidio, a Catholic lay organisation mediated the peace agreement while the UN was brought into the peace process only towards the end (Krasno 2004:248).

ONUMOZ in Mozambique learnt from the failure and shortcomings of UNAVEM II in Angola. It successfully organised and supervised elections that officially ended the armed conflict, demobilised warring factions in addition to augmenting 'the co-ordination of humanitarian aspects' of the peace accord and post-conflict peacebuilding. ONUMOZ could achieve all this due to the fact that 'a larger peacekeeping force' was deployed by the UN. This peacekeeping force had a mandate and a sufficient budget to carry out the task. Although FRELIMO defeated RENAMO in the elections, the latter did not resume the armed conflict. "Effective use of 'carrot and stick' diplomacy" by various external actors, particularly the major powers, obliged RENAMO to respect the peace accord and accept the process of democratic transition. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Aldo Ajello played a critical role in this strategy. Ajello employed the Italian government's services to provide US $ 35 million for the purpose of assisting RENAMO's democratic transition. Ajello paid the monthly amount of US $ 300,000 for over a year to the RENAMO leader for co-operating with the UN. However, the

ONUMOZs' accomplishment was made possible as a result of the international community's good will, especially the substantial external economic assistance given to the government of Mozambique and the post-conflict peace building process. Besides, Mozambique is deficient in strategic natural resources which would offer either 'spoiler' prospects or encourage the exploitation of a conflict economy which in turn would ensure the continuation of conflict or inducement for further decline into war (Francis 2006: 104-105).

Richard Synge points out, the Mozambique experience (1992 to 1994) was one of the UN's rare peacekeeping successes, which forms a remarkably 'rich source of lessons for an international community' that seems to be increasingly challenged to handle armed conflicts and complex emergencies in Africa (Synge 1997:3). He further adds, in Mozambique, the UN's task was made significantly easier due to the genuine willingness on both parties (the FRELIMO and the RENAMO) 'to halt the fighting'- one of the important factors that can make all the difference as far as success and failure are concerned in peacekeeping operations (Synge 1997:6). It may be argued that the critical factor responsible for making ONUMOZ a success was both parties' strong desire for peace. Without it, external actors' efforts could only go so far. In a situation where the parties are able or eager to resort to military options, then even more sound operations are not without their limits (Ajello and Wittmann 2004: 447).

Further, despite a number of shortcomings in the official DDR programme in Mozambique such as gender bias and marginalisation of child soldiers (those who were below fifteen years of age), the case of Mozambique illustrates the critical role an afflicted but committed community could play in healing or alleviating the wounds of conflict and reintegrating individuals into civilian or community life. Although, the process of social reintegration could be quite complex and difficult, however, as far as Mozambique is concerned the community reception mechanism has played quite a significant role. Community mechanisms that motivate demobilised combatants to view themselves 'as citizens belonging to communities' are a significant asset. Besides, it is imperative to focus on community development while reflecting on programmes to

reintegrate former combatants into civilian life. This is because of the fact that it is a situation where the fabric of social life is ruined and physical infrastructures demolished, many groups (including returnees, refugees, and vulnerable or at risk groups in general) are in need of help, and discriminatory or unfair treatment will not facilitate the reconciliation process (Lundin 1998:115). On the whole, it may be argued that the official DDR process in Mozambique did not give much attention to human security, its focus was mainly short-term development which led to the marginalisation of long-term reintegration of former soldiers, particularly children and among these children girls were neglected the most. However, traditional healers and community mechanisms helped in healing the wounds of former child soldiers.

Chapter 5

Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone

The Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process in Sierra Leone (1998-2002) has been touted as a success story by the international community. Child soldiers (below eighteen) were officially included in the process. However, there existed a gap between the official declaration regarding the inclusion of child soldiers in the DDR process and the ground reality in the country. This chapter looks into the child-specific DDR process and reintegration and rehabilitation programmes for child soldiers in post-conflict Sierra Leone (2002). It further seeks to understand, despite its shortcomings, why the Sierra Leone case is being viewed as a model for the future DDR processes by the international community. Before analysing the DDR process in Sierra Leone and the issue of human security, this chapter will give a glimpse of the brutal war in the country.

The armed conflict in Sierra Leone lasted for over a decade from March 1991 till January 2002. Although statistics vary, it is believed that during the conflict around 200, 000 people lost their lives and around two million were displaced. It is estimated that 70,000 soldiers including 7000 child combatants fought in the conflict and scores of victims today are traumatised, orphaned or homeless (Iro 2009:29). Zack-Williams states, according to conservative estimates the number of child soldiers who participated on each side of the armed conflict in Sierra Leone is between 5,000 and 7,000 (Zack-Williams 2001:73). However, according to one estimate the number of child combatants between 1998 and 2002 was 48,000 (Save the Children 2004:1).

The West Africa's linked crises of the Liberian civil war and the rebellion in Sierra Leone have many features in common with the better-documented armed conflicts in Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, and southern Sudan: particularly, the state's weakness and traditional sources of authority within civil society, the emergence of warlords as major political actors, and the use of large numbers of juvenile or young conscripts in the

conflict (Richards 1995:134). The armed conflict in Sierra Leone was not religiously or ethnically driven. It was an uprising against the corrupt government which was responsible for impoverishing the state and its people and destroying public services. Since armed groups depended significantly on abductions for the purpose of recruitment, the conflict tore communities and families apart, in a manner that could barely be sustained during peacetime. Stovel points out, as the conflict came to an end, most soldiers needed to discover a way to live among civilians who had been hurt and injured by their group, and most civilians were ready to accept them, at the very least since they believed that this was the only way to peace (Stovel 2008: 307).

Background

It was in April 1961 that Sierra Leone gained independence. At that time 'it was motley of over twelve tribes' the British colonisers 'rolled into one colony' (Mwakikagile 2001:22). The immediate post-colonial era, from 1961-1968, was marked by a power struggle between the two political factions: the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC) (Abdullah 2004:44). After independence, appeals to ethnicity seemed to be one of the simplest ways to enlist supporters in elections. While the Mende happened to be the leading force within the SLPP, the APC party received support mainly from the Temne (Keen 2005:14).

During the 1970s and 1980s the key political leaders, ex-president Siaka Stephens in particular, exploited the state and its institutions, draining the public services of their capacity to provide for the people. These political leaders formed a clientalist method of governance, wherein they used their control over resources and employment opportunities to amass power and wealth, and to exclude challengers and reward followers. By 1991, the Human Development Index rated Sierra Leone as the poorest country in the world, and the state was more or less irrelevant to the rural population (Stovel 2008:308). After the rule of Siaka Stevens and the presence of a single political party (All People's Party) from 1971-1985, the people of Sierra Leone were all set for multi-party government. However, in 1985 Major General Joseph Momoh was elected

who opposed multi-party expression and this in turn fueled the onset of conflict in Sierra Leone (UNDDR).[96]

Civil War in Sierra Leone

During the end of March 1991, a group of individuals called the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) marched into Sierra Leone from Liberia. The RUF was led by Foday Sankoh, a dissatisfied former Sierra Leone Army (SLA) corporal. Sankoh received training in Libya and was supported by Liberia's Charles Taylor who, in December 1989, launched an attack on Samuel Doe's government in Liberia from neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire. However, National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by Taylor did not succeed in seizing Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, since in August 1990 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) dispatched ECOMOG, a peacekeeping force, to Liberia. In order to distract and weaken ECOMOG, Taylor provided support to Sankoh, the RUF leader and his group comprising around hundred men (several of whom were allegedly members of Taylor's NPFL). This was due to the fact that Sierra Leone contributed troops and served as a logistical support base for the mission (Berman and Labonte 2006:144).

In 1992, the Sierra Leonean government was overthrown by junior officers. They were completely independent of the RUF rebel group, and their triumph indicated that the RUF rebels did not have a raison d'être any longer. The RUF retreated to the jungle, and it re-emerged in 1995 (Wells 2009: 147). In 1995, a Special Envoy by the UN was sent to the country to facilitate mediation of a peace agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF rebels. The endeavour did not prove effective and situation in the country deteriorated. Subsequently, the UN Security Council went ahead with issuing a series of condemnations, and called on UN member states and international financial institutions to provide aid to neighbouring states in the region to manage the massive arrival of refugees from the war-torn Sierra Leone (El-Khawas and Ndumbe 2006:81).

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[96] UNDDR Online Source

On 25 May 1997, a coup ousted the elected president, A. Tejan Kabbah. In reaction to this, an arms and oil embargo was imposed on Sierra Leone by the Security Council (Resolution 1131 on 8 October 1997). In March 1998, Kabbah was reinstated with the support of ECOMOG forces. Subsequently, the Security Council terminated the embargoes and strengthened the Special Envoy's position, adding security advisory personnel and military liaison officers to his staff. Further, the Security Council, under Resolution 1181, established the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) in July 1998 (Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2004:141). Initially, UNOMSIL had a six-month mandate following which the Security Council was to assess its progress. In addition to monitoring the truce, negotiated as part of the Conakry Peace Plan (1997), UNOMSIL was given the responsibility of administering local disarmament programmes and restructuring the state's security forces. Further, protected by the ECOMOG forces, unarmed UNOMSIL teams were given the job of cataloguing human rights abuses and atrocities against civilians. Despite UNOMSIL's efforts, rebels overran most of Freetown in January 1999 (Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2004:141-142).

During the beginning of 1999, likelihood of long-lasting peace in Sierra Leone seemed remote. There was widespread fighting in the country. Foday Sankoh was recently sentenced to death by the Sierra Leone courts, leading to much outrage and anger among those RUF rebels who supported him. However, by mid 1999, the RUF and the government had signed two agreements. The international community (United States, in particular) and key ECOWAS member countries such as Nigeria and Guinea, wielded significant pressure on T. Kabbah to put an end to the conflict through diplomatic means. To resuscitate the peace process, Kabbah provided Sankoh with a considerable incentive: Sankoh's death sentence would be revoked if Sankoh agreed to commit the RUF rebels to a nonviolent end to the armed conflict. Sankoh accepted. Subsequently peace negotiations began in Lome in Togo, whose president then chaired ECOWAS. These negotiations resulted in a cease-fire in May 1999 and the Lome Agreement of July 1999 (Berman and Labonte 2006:159-160).

UNAMSIL

In 1999 the Security Council resolution 1270 established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). It continued to be led by Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania), the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone (UN 2007:276). During mid-2001, the government of Sierra Leone controlled the capital Freetown and limited regions of the country's interior. Areas controlled by the government were protected by the Sierra Leone army, UNAMSIL, former RUF troops, British troops and mercenaries. Even though the RUF and the government signed a cease-fire accord in November 2000 in Abuja, Nigeria, the RUF defied the agreement, especially its provisions relating to disarmament. The RUF was still in control of most of Sierra Leone, however, it kept a low profile, mainly because it was fighting at the side of the Liberian forces in neighbouring Guinea (Fleitz 2002:168).

In September 2001, the Sierra Leonean government declared its plans to hold presidential and legislative elections on 14 May 2002, under the auspices of the UN (after a further rescheduling, as a result of the continuing uncertainty of the country's security situation) (Taylor and Francis Group 2004:3738). On 18 January 2002, when the disarmament process came to an end, the conflict was declared officially over by Tejan Kabbah, then the President of Sierra Leone (Commonwealth Observer Group and Commonwealth Secretariat 2006:8).

Child Soldiering in Sierra Leone

While I was based in the capital Freetown (the Western area), my curiosity to interact with former child soldiers to learn about their experiences during the war and their plight today took me to a number of districts such as Kono in the eastern province, Bombali, Tonkolili and Port Loko in the northern province, and Moyamba in the southern province. Other than Freetown (Western rural and Western urban) where I interacted with around fifty former combatants (mostly ex-child soldiers), my interviews with former child soldiers in the districts- Bombali, Kono and Moyamba were arranged by *Fambul Tok*, a leading organisation which focuses on community reconciliation and peace building. Overall, more than seventy former combatants including girls (mostly child

soldiers) were interviewed across Sierra Leone for this study. The crux of the interviews included war experience of child soldiers and their post-conflict reintegration into society and whether their families and communities accepted them after the war since a lot of these children were forced to commit atrocities such as arson, killing or amputating the limbs of their 'enemies' and some were even made to kill their own parents, their families and community members. Some of the former child soldiers who were interviewed were abducted by the RUF, some were captured by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and others by Kamajors. Most of these former soldiers had similar experiences of war and post war reintegration but with diverse perspectives of the DDR Process. Some went through the DDR process, while others escaped from armed militias before this process began, many (especially girls) opted out of the DDR process due to stigma. Although some girls like Balu, interviewed at Makeni, were not ashamed to go through the DDR.

The war transformed Sierra Leonean women, men, youth and children into forced labourers, slave soldiers and sexual slaves (Rosen 2005:59). Large numbers of children and youth participated in the conflict in Sierra Leone. The RUF, the AFRC and the Kamajors were responsible for recruiting children in their ranks. Most of over seventy former child soldiers I interviewed in Sierra Leone (Freetown, Bombali district, Moyamba district and Kono district) said that they were abducted or forcibly recruited. Some children were captured when they were as young as five or six. During my visit to Sierra Leone, Rugged, a former girl soldier, told me during an interview:

> In 1999, I was captured in Tonkolili district by a rebel commander named RAMBO from the RUF. He was one of the main commanders trained by Foday Sankoh. I was just six when I was captured (Rugged 2011).[97]

Another former child soldier, Vanjor, told me in an interview:

> I was just seven years when I was captured by the RUF rebel called Forkeye in 1996 (Vanjor 2011).[98]

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[97] Personal interview with a former girl soldier in Sierra Leone

The roles of young people in Sierra Leone's armed conflict were the outcome of a range of mobilisation strategies employed by different actors. This included mobilising discontented students and marginalised youth in Freetown in the early days; press-ganging young people into state armed forces; employing 'traditional' cultural constructs, for instance, hunting societies by the Civil Defence Forces; and coercing young people to join armed militias (for which the RUF gained unsavory reputation). The success of the above tactics was hardly fortuitous, rather it was because of premeditated predacity on the social, economic and political vulnerabilities of young people (McIntyre 2003).[99] Child soldiers in Sierra Leone were used in both combat and non-combat roles. They were used as combatants, cooks, servants, porters and spies. During my interviews in Makeni, (Bombali district), Sierra Leone, I interacted with around twenty former child soldiers.

PLK, a former child soldier in Makeni said:

> In 2000 I was abducted by the RUF in Makeni. I was just seven. I was made to carry heavy load from one village to another on foot. I worked as a servant. I did cooking, laundry and cleaning (PLK 2011).[100]

In Makeni, another former child soldier named Aminho told me during the interview:

> In 1996, the RUF captured me in Makeni. I was just seven years. They treated me like a slave. I was made to do laundry, cooking, washing. They made me carry load. When I was nine they gave me a gun. However, I never killed anyone (Aminho 2011).[101]

Girls were used as sexual slaves and some even participated in fighting. Other than girls such as Balu and Rugged who I interviewed in Sierra Leone, Sheku Sesay, a former child soldier (boy) in Freetown, Sierra Leone told me about his experience of sexual abuse:

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[98] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[99] Online Source
[100] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Makeni (Bombali District), Sierra Leone
[101] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Makeni, Sierra Leone

> I was captured in Port Loko when I was fifteen. The RUF commander tried to sexually abuse me (Sesay 2011).[102]

Another former boy soldier, Safea Mondeh, whom I interviewed in Koidu Town (Kono district) in Sierra Leone, said:

> I was very small when I was recruited by the RUF. I was sexually abused by my commander many times (Mondeh 2011).[103]

Some of the former child soldiers who I interviewed in Sierra Leone said that they were forced to kill or amputate their "enemies". Alusain Kabia, a former child soldier said during the interview:

> When I was seventeen I was captured by the RUF in Kono. RUF forced me to kill people. They made me amputate people (Kabia 2011).[104]

Revolutionary United Front

The RUF was established in the year 1988 by a group of university-educated radicals and the joint forces of disgruntled former army photographer named Foday Sankoh and an Americo-Liberian warlord Charles Taylor (Lezhnev 2006:27). At the outset the RUF was a radical student movement that degenerated into one of the nastiest instruments of terror in contemporary Africa (Rosen 2005:60). In 1987-1988, between 35 to 100 individuals from the student groups, along with Taylor, and uneducated Sankoh, and other warlord kinds, left for Benghazi, Libya, to train in the revolutionary schools of Muammar Qaddaffi, the Libyan leader. Although, most of those people who actually wanted to transform Sierra Leone soon dropped out when they came to realise that Foday Sankoh and his allies were pillaging money and usurping the movement for Taylor's interests (Lezhnev 2006:28).

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[102] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone; Only 2 or 3 boys among 69 boy soldiers who were interviewed in Sierra Leone said they were sexually abused.
[103] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Koidu Town (Kono District), Sierra Leone
[104] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

Unlike most armed conflicts where civilian losses are an unfortunate spin-off of the warfare between the soldiers, the RUF can be distinguished for its brutal policy of purposely targeting civilians. This is evident from the testimonies that Human Rights Watch (HRW) took from dozens of witnesses and survivors of gross human rights violations carried out by the RUF rebels on the civilians in Sierra Leone. The rights abuses included the following- rape; genital mutilation; injections with acid; machete gashes to the arms, feet, legs, head, neck, and torso; gunshot injuries to the limbs, head, and torso; the gouging of eyes; and burns from explosives as well as other devises. Further, the RUF introduced a new phenomenon to armed conflicts which is the amputation of limbs as an instrument of terror (Strauss 2002:94).

Paul Richards points out three key elements of the initial RUF campaign in 1991. First of all, the police as well as government's civilian representatives were made to flee by a well-orchestrated rumour campaign (anchored in the circulation of mail to villagers projecting when an assault would begin, and the outcome of resistance). Next, villagers were threatened by violence against traders, chiefs, and minor civil servants, the key 'repositories of power in a local clientalist political system'. Further, young people were recruited and held in camps for military training, and local primary school buildings were taken as camp headquarters. Furthermore, eyewitness accounts highlight that laggard recruits were at times compelled at gunpoint to participate in atrocities against community leaders and family members. Villagers report that they were required to witness the horrifying sight of public beheadings wherein the victim's collar was slashed 'from back to front with a blunt blade'. The motive behind these atrocities appears to have been to cause an irreversible break between recruits and their communities. Consequently, youth recruits could not flee for fear of retaliation (Richards 1995:158).

Child Soldiers in RUF Ranks

The RUF engaged in massive forced recruitment, which by 1999 numbered over 24,000. Scores of RUF officers happened to be below eighteen years of age and most senior officers shared very little of the RUF's initial ideology (Restoy 2006:2). During the initial period of the insurgence the RUF engaged in massive enlistment of young people.

Abduction and recruitment of children went on for most of the armed conflict and increased again towards its closing stages. Initially there were very few fighters in the RUF ranks and it desperately needed to recruit more people. Over half of Sierra Leone's population was below fifteen years of age, had few education and employment opportunities and had experienced abuse as child recruits in mines or in other jobs for decades. Young people recruited by the RUF endured the same forms of terror that civilians experienced through RUF leaders, and they themselves were instructed to carry out these atrocities (Restoy 2006:3). During my interview with Ibraham Kanu (known as the Killer), a former child soldier in Sierra Leone, he said:

> At the age of fourteen I was given a gun and trained. I was also forced by my commander to amputate people (Kanu 2011).[105]

The RUF employed child soldiers in all types of jobs, including combat roles, from the time the war began. According to some estimates there were times when up to 70 per cent of all RUF combatants were below eighteen years of age. A number of RUF commanders, mainly towards the closing stages of the war, were child soldiers. While more experienced commanders happened to be at the front, those at the rear were often child commanders. In some areas, young people below sixteen years of age were apparently not employed in fighting due to the fear that they might be captured and made informers. They were employed in "civilian relations", namely, in intimidation operations, pillaging in the RUF-controlled communities, and other graver abuses. In other regions, those as young as twelve received military training, which included 'the use of firearms', and were sent to the front. At the time the conflict neared its end no minimum age was laid down for military training or participating in combat (Restoy 2006:5). Amadu, a former child solider in Koidu Town (Kono district) which was the stronghold of the RUF, told me during the interview:

> When I was six the RUF captured me in Kono district. I can't remember the year. When I was eleven I was given a gun. I was trained when I was twelve. I killed my enemies. I had a single barrel gun (Amadu 2011).[106]

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[105] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[106] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Koidu Town (Kono District), Sierra Leone

Some children in the RUF ranks were given a gun and forced to kill when they were even younger than twelve. During my interviews with former child soldiers in Moyamba (Sierra Leone), Sylvenius, a former child soldier said:

> When I was eight they gave me a gun to shoot. But I was not able to lift it. I was dragging the gun (Sylvenius 2011).[107]

Rosen notes, in Sierra Leone, the abduction of children and young people, the permanent tattooing of child combatants with the sign of the RUF, and the reports of appalling rites wherein children were compelled to kill family and community members in public to ensure their estrangement from them reflect 'the trademark violence of a slave regime' (Rosen 2005:59). Large numbers of children in the RUF ranks were forcibly tattooed and were made to indulge in drugs. During my interviews with former child soldiers in Freetown where I interacted with around fifty former child soldiers I was told that most of them were forcibly given drugs and some even showed me their tattoos. Akim, a former child soldier said:

> RUF gave me drugs in different forms. They mixed my food with drugs. They gave me injections. They gave me coke. With coke in my head I don't know how many people I killed. I burned all things- villages, children, everybody. I had three weapons- pistol, AK 47 and mortar. Later I became a commander. I gave orders to kill enemies (Akim 2011).[108]

In Koidu Town (Kono district), Sierra Leone, where I interviewed around fifteen former child soldiers, Safea Mondeh, a former child soldier said:

> I was very small when the RUF recruited me in Kono district. They also forcibly tattooed me (Mondeh 2011).[109]

Besides the RUF, other armed militias such as the AFRC and the Civil Defense Militia (CDF) (known as the Kamajors) were also involved in the recruitment of child soldiers. While Kono district in the Eastern province was the stronghold of the RUF, the Southern

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[107] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Moyamba, (Moyamba District), Sierra Leone
[108] Personal interview with a former child soldier in the capital Freetown, Sierra Leone
[109] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Koidu Town (Kono District), Sierra Leone

province which comprises of Bo district, Moyamba district and Pujeun district was the stronghold of the Kamajors. Among the former child soldiers I interacted with during my visit to Sierra Leone there were some who were captured by the AFRC and the Kamajors. Most of these former soldiers were also used in combat and non-combat roles. Some were drugged and some were even forcibly tattooed. A number of them were given a weapon and trained to shoot. My curiosity to learn about the child recruitment policies of the Kamajors took me to Moyamba, a lush green town in the south of the country.

Abdul K, a former child soldier told me during the interview:

> I was recruited by the Kamajors in 1998. I was only seven. I was captured in Fakunya chiefdom (Moyamba district). They held around ten children including the teacher. I was with Kamajors along with nine small kids for two months. I did cooking, cleaning and laundry. I was forced to smoke *jamba* (marijuana) at one time (Abdul K 2011).[110]

One former child soldier, C. Conteh at Pademba Road, Freetown in Sierra Leone who was recruited by the AFRC said during the interview:

> When I was eleven my friend Junior left me with AFRC. AFRC gave me a pistol at eleven and trained me. I fired but I don't know if I killed people (Conteh 2011).[111]

Peace Process in Sierra Leone

In January 2002, subsequent to the countrywide conclusion of the disarmament process in Sierra Leone, the UN officials, government officials, and leaders of the RUF, formally announced the end of Sierra Leone's decade-long war. The peace process that brought an end to the armed conflict began with changes in RUF leadership in August 2000 and a cease-fire agreement of November 2000 (Cook 2003:18). It was in September 2002 that, UNAMSIL embarked on a slow and cautious process of reducing its presence in the country, slowly handing over security functions to the Sierra Leonean government. In

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[110] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[111] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

December 2005, UNAMSIL's mission came to an end. It was 'replaced by a small political mission, the UN Integrated Office for Sierra Leone' (Fortna 2008:61).

Background to UNAMSIL

UNAMSIL was established as a result of decisions reached at Lome on 7 July 1999 when parties to the Sierra Leonean conflict viz, the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL), led by President T. Kabbah and the rebels headed by the RUF's Foday Sankoh, decided on forming a Government of National Unity (Jetley 2006:208). As mentioned previously, the UN Security Council Resolution 1270 called for the creation of UNAMSIL, an International Peace Keeping Force 'with a strength of 6000 personnel including 260 Military Observers'. Following are some of the key features of the UNAMSIL mandate:

> Cooperate with the Government of Sierra Leone and other parties to the Peace Agreement in its implementation.
>
> Assist in the implementation of the DDR programme to include security at the reception centres and DDR camps.
>
> To ensure security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel.
>
> To monitor adherence to the Ceasefire.
>
> To facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
>
> To provide support to the GOSL for the conduct of free and fair elections.
>
> Acting under Chapter VII of the charter of the United Nations, UNAMSIL to take necessary action to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and, within its capabilities and areas of deployment, to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of violence, taking into account the responsibilities of the GOSL and ECOMOG (Jetley 2006:209).

Lome Peace Accord

During the 1990s in Sierra Leone, three key peace negotiations took place, which led to the following accords: the Abidjan Peace Accord (30 November 1996); the Conakry (ECOWAS) Peace Plan (23 October 1997); and the Lome Peace Accord (7 July 1999). The Lomé Peace Agreement (7 July 1999) eventually became the operational document for the Sierra Leone's peace process. One of the main provisions of this accord was to develop a feasible Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (DDRP)

for soldiers of the various groups to bring about war to peace transition which in turn would result in stability. By and large, the DDRP's goal was disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants for the purpose of consolidating short-term security as a basis for durable peace in Sierra Leone (UN 2005:22).

Adetula observes, the progress made as regards the implementation of the Lome Peace accord is laudable. He further notes, the government of Sierra Leone has set up all the institutions and mechanisms for peace thrashed out in the accord, which include the setting up of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) which is involved in a programme concerning transformation of former soldiers. The internal peace process is also making headway with the participation of civil society organisations. Nonetheless, six years following the reinstatement of Kabbah to the post of the president of Sierra Leone the political condition in the country was still quite far from stable (Adetula 2008:15-16).

It may also be pointed out that perhaps the most obvious example of a fragile or poor peace process causing renewed volatility was the design and implementation of the Lome Peace Accord (1999), which was aimed at ending Sierra Leone's armed conflict. The peace process in the country collapsed due to a combination of issues. First, internal as well as external demands for peace compelled President Ahmed T. Kabbah's already-weakened government to agree to a peace accord that favoured the rebels over the government and the people of Sierra Leone. Many RUF leaders who had committed atrocities were given important cabinet positions. Sankoh was appointed chairman of the Strategic Minerals Commission. Moreover, not all RUF leaders were prepared for peace and there were some who decided to disregard the disarmament process. Sam Bockarie, RUF's key field commander rejected the agreement and eventually turned spoiler in the peace process. In December 1999, when he left Sierra Leone he took several RUF combatants with him, and used them in addition to Liberian combatants to destabilise the country in 2000 and 2001 (Ero and Temin 2004:116-117).

Next, the international community proved unsuccessful in providing Sierra Leone with sufficient non-military resources after the accord was signed. The US forced the peace (in effect writing the Lome agreement), and the UK insisted on a UN peacekeeping force, however, both were reluctant to provide significant resources. Further, the international community was not geared up to provide the required military assistance to Sierra Leone. In February 1999, Nigeria indicated that it would go ahead with removing its forces which were present for two years, yet, the international community did not step into the violation. The deployed UN force was besieged by the rebels and in May and June 2000, the RUF combatants abducted around 5000 peacekeepers. Lastly, RUF commanders had no interest in peace, having stated that the dispirited government could be ousted, and conflict restarted. The international community had to pay a hefty price for failing to intervene sooner and with greater effect: UNAMSIL- the new, more robust peacekeeping force had cost around U.S. $ 2 billion by the end of 2002 (Sriram et. al 2004:116-117). The Lome agreement soon collapsed and without the timely intervention of the UK, Sierra Leone would have regressed into full-blown conflict in May 2000 (Kabia 2009:188).

It is said that one of the reasons for the RUF backtracking on all the peace accords signed during the Sierra Leone's war was the financial gains flowing to its leadership through the unlawful sale of diamonds. In fact, some of the papers found at Sankoh's house following the January 2000 raid at his residence revealed that exploitation and sale of diamonds increased instantaneously after the agreements were signed (Alao 2007:123).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In Sierra Leone, the prospect of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was initially touted in the Human Rights Committee of Sierra Leone (1999). Later it acquired a place in the Lome Peace accord (1999) (Savage and Rahall 2003:54). The Lome Peace accord (7 July 1999) affirmed that the TRC was to be set up within ninety days. While efforts were soon undertaken for this task, legislation concerning the purpose was not adopted by the Parliament of Sierra Leone until 22 February 2000 (Schabas 2004:6). The

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act, drawing on the truth commissions' experiences elsewhere, focused on the specific needs of the people of Sierra Leone. It defined the goal of the TRC as the creation of an unbiased historical record of abuses and violations of human rights pertaining to the Sierra Leone civil war, from the commencement of the war in 1991 to the signing of the Lome Peace Accord in 1999. It also dealt with the issues of impunity, victims' needs and methods that Sierra Leone might adopt to ensure that the dreadful 'past does not repeat itself' (Savage and Rahall 2003:54).

In 2003, Savage and Rahall pointed out, the most significant impediment facing the TRC is a lack of resources (Savage and Rahall 2003:54). They further argued, it is also recognised that 'a comprehensive public awareness and education campaign' are imperative to clarify the goals, purposes, benefits and workings of the TRC and to demonstrate its varied 'roles and independence from the Special Court' (Savage and Rahall 2003:55).

Further, Rosalind Shaw has documented the tension for several victims in Sierra Leone, between the truth-telling highlighted by the TRC and the traditional community reintegration and healing practices developed from the extensive practice of 'social forgetting'. Shaw makes a distinction between social forgetting and individual forgetting, in the former, while individuals may talk about the conflict in private, there is a communal unwillingness to do so in public due to the assumption that this could reignite violence both spiritually and physically, and exacerbate social tensions (Marshall 2007:149). For instance, in the northern part of Sierra Leone, social forgetting has been the basis for continuing healing and community reintegration for former combatants, including former child soldiers. In Sierra Leone, instances were reported of communities jointly refusing to provide statements to the TRC, or giving incomplete statements so as to protect former child soldiers, their neighbours as well as their communities. This was partly because of the conflict between the affirmed 'resolve of the TRC that reconciliation was only to be achieved through truth'. Marshall notes, the faith

in social forgetting that many Sierra Leoneans had led them to disregard the TRC, however, this tension did not allow either to have full effect (Marshall 2007:150).

Transitional justice in general has witnessed calls for more culturally-adaptative approaches; this critique is especially relevant for TRCs. Truth commission is the most broadly and directly participatory justice system and the system with the most sweeping, explicit cultural objectives: truth, reconciliation and long-lasting readjustment of social relations. 'To maximize opportunity for success', any existing local reconciliation and reintegration processes and practices should be sought out and carefully assessed for convergence and conflict with new proposed initiatives (Marshall 2007:151). During the interview in Sierra Leone, Florella Hazelley, the Sierra Leone Action Network for Small Arms (SLANSA) Coordinator explained to me:

> At the end of the hearing, the TRC in Sierra Leone in association with others organised the traditional healing reintegration ceremony for ex-combatants (Hazelley 2011).[112]

On the positive side, the TRC in Sierra Leone made efforts to connect with women's organisations so that they could be included in the process. Therefore, women's groups actively worked towards raising awareness regarding the TRC's work, they even testified in the hearings, assisted victims of sexual abuse, made recommendations in favour of a reparations programme, pressurising the government to implement it (SIPRI 2008:169). The TRC did give precedence to male survivors of sexual abuse 'as a category of victim in its recommendations for reparations'. Nonetheless, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) points out, considering that all the cases of sexual slavery and rape reported to the Truth Commission concerned females, it may be argued that inadequate efforts were made to encourage males who suffered sexual abuse, to come forward (SIPRI 2008: 169-170).

Finally in 2004, the TRC in Sierra Leone published its concluding report regarding the causes and outcome of the armed conflict (1991-2002) in the country. It

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[112] Personal interview in Freetown, Sierra Leone with Florella Hazelley, the Sierra Leone Action Network for Small Arms (SLANSA) Coordinator

demonstrated that several driving forces of the war related to a prior collapse of trust; both as regards popular disillusionment with state institutions and traditional political mechanisms, and as regards a deep social rift between the youth of Sierra Leone and the older generations. If these issues played a role in promoting conflict, conflict itself served to further weaken trust across all levels, leading the Truth Commission to observe that trust-building remained fundamental to the overall task of rebuilding Sierra Leone (Mitton 2009: 462).

Special Court for Sierra Leone

The regeneration of fighting in Sierra Leone in May 2000, almost a year following the Lome Peace accord, not just delayed the establishment of the TRC; but also restarted a debate concerning the legitimacy of the amnesty. The Sierra Leonean government "reassessed" its position as regards the amnesty, and appealed to the UN to set up a special tribunal (Schabas 2005:143). The UN Security Council, in August 2000, mandated the establishment of an independent special court:

> to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for the commission of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law as well as crimes under relevant Sierra Leonean law committed within the territory of Sierra Leone (Pratt 2003:83).

The Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL or Special Court) was the first hybrid or mixed tribunal. This tribunal has been projected as 'the model' for similar institutions (Steiner et al. 2008:1310). Like the TRC, the Special Court also took time to actualise, and it was in January 2002 that the Government of Sierra Leone and the UN arrived at official agreement on the plan. 'In April 2002, the *Special Court Agreement (Ratification) Act 2002* was adopted' to facilitate the effective functioning of the court and to implement Sierra Leone's obligations under the agreement with the UN (Schabas 2005:143-144).

As Avril MacDonald points out:

> It is the first time that an international court, even a quasi one such as the Special Court, will function simultaneously with such an institution, and offers an interesting experiment in how criminal prosecutions can complement other processes aimed at providing justice and promoting reconciliation and peacebuilding (Schabas 2005:143-144).

Both the Special Court and the TRC began operations at around the same time (Schabas 2005: 144). In March 2003 eight indictments were issued against a number of obvious and familiar suspects, including Sankoh, ex-RUF leader; J. Paul Koroma, ex-Junta leader; Sam Hinga Norman, incumbent deputy defense minister; and Charles Taylor, then the president of Liberia. Trials commenced in June 2004 (Schabas 2005:144). It was decided that the period covered by the Court will be from the date of the Abidjan Peace accord i.e. November 30, 1996, onward. Further, the amnesty included in the July 1999 Lome Peace accord will be applicable to the infringement of Sierra Leonean law, and not to breaches of international law. It was further decided that the trial chamber will comprise of three judges and the Government of Sierra Leone will appoint one judge while the other two will be appointed by the Secretary General of the UN. And the Secretary General will appoint three of the five judges in the appeal chamber and the prosecutor (Pratt 2003:83).

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has faced criticism for the evident inconsistency between the jurisdiction of the Special Court and the extensive and horrendous crimes carried out during the armed conflict from 1991 to 2002. Its mandate entails the prosecution of merely those with 'greatest responsibility', and considers only crimes or atrocities committed since the date of the Abidjan Peace Accord (30 November 1996). Unfortunately, the already restricted mandate has been narrowly interpreted by the Special Court's prosecutor. The Court's narrow focus, along with 'political, temporal, and financial constraints', causes impunity for many sophisticated perpetrators (Stensrud 2009:9).

It is not possible for any tribunal to deal with 'all perpetrators of war crimes or crimes against humanity', however the impunity issues are graver with the extremely limited prosecutions of the mixed courts than with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). One hundred and sixty one individuals have been indicted by the ICTY while 74 persons have been detained by the ICTR (Stensrud 2009:9). Stensrud points out, the mixed model in Sierra Leone ensures a minority of judges from Sierra Leone and a majority of international judges. Besides, non-Sierra Leoneans have been appointed by the government of Sierra Leone to positions where Sierra Leoneans could have been appointed. Further, non-Sierra Leoneans dominate the higher positions at the Special Court. This has resulted in a criticism that the court's legacy potential is not realised- "that there is little 'trickle-down effect' to the national judiciary" (Stensrud 2009:9-10).

Stensrud further states, the court has attempted to improve its work on legacy, however it is uncertain that this can alter the general impression that the court has failed to be truly mixed. It is evidently uncertain whether a greater national participation would have automatically 'ensured a legacy on the national judiciary', however, the expectation is nonetheless real. Stensrud continues, this demonstrates how expectations are generated with the establishment of an internationalised court in the affected society. Moreover, it demonstrates the significance of considering the local conditions and needs while designing and implementing mixed courts (Stensrud 2009:10).

Currently, the former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, notorious for his association with Sierra Leone's RUF rebels, is on trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone at the Hague. He is accused of selling diamonds and purchasing weapons for the RUF during the civil war in Sierra Leone (1991-2002). Taylor has pleaded not guilty to eleven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity- murder, sexual slavery, rape, torture, and using child soldiers. In 2007 Taylor became the first head of state in Africa to face an international court on the allegations of war crimes when his trial began in the Hague before the Special Court for Sierra Leone. In July 2009 Taylor decided to defend

himself. Denying all charges, Taylor audaciously portrayed himself as a peacemaker. However, it is yet to be seen what course his trial takes.

During my visit to Sierra Leone one of the UN Women staff pointed out:

> Both the TRC and Special Court for Sierra Leone were effective in bringing peace. The SCSL was sending out a message to those who were continuing to commit crimes that they cannot go scot-free (UN Women 2011).[113]

On the other hand, in my interview with Florella Hazelley, the Sierra Leone Action Network of Small Arms (SLANSA) Coordinator, Hazelley said:

> The Special Court strangled the TRC. The Special Court could have waited so that the TRC could efficiently complete its task (Hazelley 2011).[114]

On the whole, it may be pointed out that there exist a number of weaknesses in the Special Court. Some of the most prominent ones are:

First, the period covered by the Court is from the date of the Abidjan Peace accord i.e. November 30, 1996, onward. However, the conflict began in 1991 when the rebels and other armed militias engaged in gross human rights violations.

Second, the amnesty included in the July 1999 Lome Peace accord is applicable to the infringement of Sierra Leonean law, and not to breaches of International Law.

Third, the Special Court's mandate entails the prosecution of merely those with 'greatest responsibility', which results in impunity for a number of perpetrators.

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[113] Personal interview in Freetown (Sierra Leone) with one of the UN Women staff
[114] Personal interview in Freetown (Sierra Leone) with Florella Hazelley, the Sierra Leone Action Network of Small Arms (SLANSA) Coordinator

Actors in the Peace Process

The international community (through the UN, the ECOWAS, and the OAU, in addition to some individual countries- for instance Nigeria, the US and the UK), was engaged in seeking to end the war in Sierra Leone (Kuper 2005: 219). The European Union (EU) and the US also provided financial and logistic assistance to ECOMOG in addition to humanitarian aid to large number of refugees and displaced people. By 1999, western states partially in reaction to Nigeria's declaration to pull out from Sierra Leone considering the then growing civilian dispensation in Nigeria increased their support for the ECOMOG. The UK promised an extra 'US $ 1.65 million matching grant'. 'As at mid-1999, US $7 million of those sums' had been utilised to ensure logistical assistance to ECOMOG. Even as some of these countries were highly praised for their support, however, France in particular was blamed for having supplied arms to the rebel group RUF through Liberia and Burkina Faso. In 2002, as part of Sierra Leone's peace building process, the World Bank (WB) technically agreed to allot more than US $ 140 million to assist reconstruction and development work and tackle HIV/AIDS in the country (Agbu 2006:37).

Further, UNICEF played an important role in building an effectual Child Protection Network which helped in the coordination of 'tracing, family reunification, and respective DDR roles among NGOs, international organisations, governmental structures, and peacekeeping forces' (Williamson 2005:5). UNICEF's partners in Sierra Leone reported reuniting 5,500 ex-child combatants as well as other separated children with their families. Through facilitation by UNICEF and the supervision of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs, a geographic distribution 'of responsibility for monitoring the situation of these children was established among child protection NGOs' (Williamson 2005:16).

Civil Society

As the conflict got worse and the governance turned increasingly oppressive, culminating in the establishment of the AFRC/RUF military rule, organisations began to develop calling for human rights, civil liberties, and democratically accountable political system.

Some of these organisations are the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights, the Women's Movement for Peace, and a local branch of Amnesty International. Further, Concerned Youths for Peace (CONYOPA), a civil society organisation has been active since the year 1996, sharing information, ideas, and resources through various mediums such as seminars, symposia, conferences, lectures, workshops, and publishing materials on issues related to youth development and peace. The National Forum for Human Rights operates as secretariat for over thirty human rights organisations in the country. The Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (SLANGO) serves as an umbrella organisation for local NGOs (Savage and Rahall 2003:53).

Civil society in Sierra Leone had an integral role to play in neutralising the RUF leader Foday Sankoh. Demonstrations and pressure from the civil society resulted in the arrest and incarceration of Foday Sankoh following the crisis of May 2000. The entire international community including the UN discredited Sankoh and insisted that the RUF opt for a new leadership. This unbending posture by international and domestic supporters of the peace efforts immensely undermined the RUF's destructive potential. The poor performance of the RUF party (RUF-P) during the elections in May 2002 practically corroborated the breakdown of the movement. Further, the British military intervention counteracted the 'West Side Boys', a by-product of the former Sierra Leone Army and the AFRC, providing a credible military deterrence to potential 'spoilers' (Kabia 2009:166).

DDR

Sierra Leone has been cited as one of the most successful examples of DDR. Sean Bradley et al argue, the successful example of the DDR programme in the country can be useful in drawing important general lessons for future involvement in disarmament and demobilisation programmes, 'with reference to the peace process, the institutional framework, and the disarmament and demobilisation operations' (Bradley et al 2002).[115] In Sierra Leone, disarmament and demobilisation of former combatants went through

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[115] Online Source

three stages from September 1998 to January 2002. The three stages of disarmament are as follows:

- Phase 1: September – December 1998;
- Phase II: October 1999 – April 2000;
- Interim phase: May 2000 – 17 May 2001;
- Phase III: 18 May 2001 – January 2002.

It may be noted that what determined these different phases including 'the time lapses between them was a series of political events that were related to the negotiation of peace'. This shows that the disarmament process is, in fact 'part of the political process and should be undertaken within the broader framework of conflict resolution and peace building' (Thusi 2004).[116] Agbu observes, one of the key success stories of the Sierra Leonean peace efforts is the DDR process (1998 to 2002). The DDR process committed the government of Tejan Kabbah to the complete DDR of an estimated 45,000 combatants (Agbu 2006:38).

As mentioned previously, the DDR programme in Sierra Leone experienced three different phases with associated hindrances including a coup, initial non-cooperation with peace accords, programme restructuring, and so on. Regardless of the setbacks and delays the DDR programme was implemented successfully and it documented the following key achievements: establishment and management of a number of disarmament and demobilisation centres in alliance with major implementing partners across Sierra Leone; disarmament and demobilisation of more than 71,000 former soldiers; and payment of Transitional Safety Allowances to more than 54,000 eligible beneficiaries who voluntarily enrolled for such schemes. These beneficiaries also received the benefit of joining economic reintegration programmes which included apprenticeship/vocational skills training, formal education and agriculture. In addition, social reintegration efforts that encouraged reconciliation and forgiveness were largely achieved. Further, vigorous information and sensitisation campaigns and monitoring and assessment systems were

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[116] Online Source

major activities that added to the general accomplishment of the DDR programme in the country (UN 2005:23).

The UN (2005) states, the DDR programme in Sierra Leone noticeably contributed to bringing about sustained peace in the country. However, it failed to address all the key causes of the armed conflict, which are part and parcel of a wider social, political, economic as well as juridical recovery effort. Such long-term concerns are being tackled through decentralisation of governance, democratic elections, reconciliation drives, judicial reform, security sector reform, 'and transitional recovery programmes (through the National Recovery Strategy) and a medium-term (2005-2007) Poverty Reduction Strategy' (UN 2005:23-24).

Disarmament

While the DDR process was carried out under the policy guidance of the National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR), the disarmament was conducted virtually by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) and ECOMOG. Overall, a sum of 42, 300 weapons in addition to around 1.2 million rounds of ammunition were gathered and destroyed, and 72, 490 combatants from various armed factions were disarmed and demobilised (Agbu 2006:38).

It has been reported that in 2002, former combatants in Sierra Leone were induced to surrender their weapons for cash. Donors paid a sum of US$80 million for DDR, according to the UN DDR website's outline of its activities in the country. Each combatant is reported to have received $150 for surrendering a weapon. Although DDR statistics reveal that while approximately 72,490 soldiers were disarmed, less than half that number of weapons was collected. Allan Quee, the founder of the Post-Conflict Reintegration Initiative for Development and Empowerment (PRIDE), a local civil society group, who worked as a DDR consultant for the UN mission in Liberia, argues that a lot of weapons in Sierra Leone landed in the neighbouring Liberia since the Liberian DDR programme offered twice the amount offered in the Sierra Leone DDR

programme. He points out, other weapons might have ended up in Cote d'Ivoire where the disarmament programme offered four times as much (IRIN 2007).[117]

In Sierra Leone as well as Liberia, UNAMSIL and UNMIL respectively permitted the commanders of various armed groups to take charge of the weapons. Although this might have been helpful from the security perspective, it also helped the commanders consolidate power in their hands. Dufka notes, many of those who were interviewed for his report, argued that the weapons collected by the commanders during the Liberian and Sierra Leonean disarmament exercises were sometimes kept by the armed factions or given away to the peacekeepers. Technically, the commanders were required to present lists of combatants 'from whom they had received weapons'. However, according to the former combatants interviewed by Human Rights Watch (HRW) who participated in the Sierra Leone disarmament process, the commanders could put anyone of their choice on the list, and as the process commenced, admit them into the programme. They were also able to pressurise their subordinates into providing a proportion of the benefits or "sell" the place in the DDR programme to a relative or friend, who was in turn ready to provide "the commander a cut from 'their' DDR benefits" (Dufka 2005:57-58).

Dufka further states, the DDR programme in Sierra Leone disarmed more than 70,000 combatants, however up to 2000 are believed to have been recruited again and they in fact later fought in conflicts in Cote d' Ivoire and Liberia. Considering that a number of recent conflicts in West Africa began with a small number of fighters, often just several hundred, and that most were provided through forced recruitment and abductions, even this small failure has potentially wide ramifications (Dufka 2005:48). In Sierra Leone, Donald Kolokoh from Youth Action International told me during an interview that the disarmament programme was quite successful. The bulk of ex-combatants were disarmed (Kolokoh 2011).[118] Similarly, Florella Hazelley from SLANSA pointed out that disarmament was more or less successful (Hazelley 2011).[119]

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[117] Online Source
[118] Personal interview in Freetown, Sierra Leone with Donald Kolokoh from Youth Action International
[119] Personal interview in Freetown, Sierra Leone with Florella Hazelley from SLANSA

However, as mentioned previously, one of the major weaknesses in the DDR process in Sierra Leone was that former child soldiers (girls and boys) were required to hand over a weapon to participate in DDR even though officially it was not mandatory for child soldiers to hand over a weapon to register in DDR. Idrissa Conteh, a former child soldier at Lumley car wash, Freetown in Sierra Leone told me in an interview:

> I was captured by the RUF along with my dad in 1992 in Kenema district. I was trained as a spy. At the age of fourteen I was killing people. During the time the DDR was launched I could not enter it because I didn't have a weapon. Only those with ammunition could go through the DDR process. Then I started selling drugs within the country. I was in jail for eighteen months for selling drugs. After I was released I started washing cars. I was forced to burn down the village by the RUF so the people of the village did not accept me (Conteh 2011).[120]

Demobilisation

In April 2000 the demobilisation process in Sierra Leone was scheduled as a phased process with the simultaneous demobilisation of all different groups. However, problems arose and the RUF restrained some of its combatants, causing the entire peace process to decelerate, and influencing the pace of reintegration in the RUF areas (Douglas et al. 2004:50). Another important issue was the abhorrence towards the RUF combatants which exposed them to the threat of being killed during the demobilisation process.

Interim Care Centres

Once child soldiers underwent demobilisation, they were separated from adult combatants. Some children, particularly those who had participated in the CDF, were not out of touch with their family and could return straight to their home. However, others were sent to an Interim Care Centre (ICC) run by one of the NGOs for child protection. These were usually based a little away from the site of demobilisation. A total of 5038 demobilised children went through the Interim Centres before they were shut down (Williamson 2006).[121]

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[120] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[121] Online Source

Furthermore, Kingma observes, timing can be decisive in reintegration and resettlement assistance. During the demobilisation process in Sierra Leone and Angola frustration and turmoil among the former combatants arose during the encampment and discharge phase, since the provision of basic needs which includes food, shelter, water and sanitation, was insufficient (Kingma 2002: 195).

Reintegration

In the aftermath of conflict, there were two major aspects of reintegration that deserved attention- economic and social. As far as the economic reintegration was concerned, the DDR programme set up skills training programmes for former child soldiers which could help them get jobs. And social reintegration of former child soldiers was possible only if these former soldiers were accepted by the community. Efforts were made by a number of international and local NGOs to build trust between former child soldiers and the community.

Economic Reintegration

Most former child soldiers I interacted with during my visit to Sierra Leone are still facing economic hardships, while some have reintegrated reasonably well in society. Education and training which would lead to employment or economic opportunity are absolutely crucial for successful reintegration and rehabilitation of former combatants. In Sierra Leone, a number of combatants who underwent job training programmes complained of the excess of skilled workers in some fields which had been created by the DDR programme in Sierra Leone. They were not able to find beneficial employment since the economy just could not take in so many new people- primarily car mechanics, tailors and carpenters- flooding into the market (Dufka 2005:67).

During my visit to Sierra Leone, I interacted with a number of DDR drivers or those former child soldiers who were trained in driving as part of the DDR. However, many of these former soldiers at the Lumley car wash in Freetown told me that they were not given a license and no help was provided to them in getting a job.

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Johnny Davis who was trained in driving for six months told me during an interview:

> In 1990 I was forcibly recruited by Major Kamara of AFRC in Freetown. I was fifteen years old. They forced me to kill people. In 2002 I disarmed in Lungi. I learnt driving for six months. I am not satisfied because after training there was no job facility (Davis 2011).[122]

In a number of cases, the DDR programme in Sierra Leone trained former child soldiers in those skills which were not sustainable or not adequate for a primarily agricultural society like Sierra Leone. Some of these skills were driving, soap making, and beautician skills (for girls).

T. Turay, a former child soldier told me during an interview:

> RUF captured me in Kono. They gave me a gun and trained me when I was seven. I was called small killer. I went through DDR. I gave my AK 47. I learnt soap making. But soap making was not sustainable. Then I started doing masonry on my own. Now I do nothing. Friends help each other (Turay 2011).[123]

Moreover, most child soldiers I interacted with in Sierra Leone said after the skills training programme they did not receive help in getting a job. Yankube Sanda, a former child soldier told me in an interview:

> I went through the DDR programme and learnt mechanic skills for six months. But no help in getting a job (Sanda 2011).[124]

Further, several former soldiers from Sierra Leone participated in the regions' conflicts regardless of having finished skills training and, in certain cases, even though they had begun to earn a living by their trade (Dufka 2005:69).

Social Reintegration

It has been almost a decade since the end of the war in Sierra Leone. A number of former child soldiers I spoke with in Sierra Leone are still facing problems of social acceptance,

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[122] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[123] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[124] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

while there are also those who have been accepted by the community and reintegrated reasonably well in society. In the aftermath of the long brutal war, a number of girls and boys formerly associated with the armed militias, especially the RUF pointed out that they experienced some sort of rejection and/or were stigmatised by their families and the broader community due to the atrocities they committed during the conflict. These experiences were debilitating and truly excruciating for these former soldiers. A number of children were permanently tattooed with the symbols or marks of armed militias. Consequently, these young people continue to suffer rejection, stigma and shame.

Some of the ex-combatants I interacted with during my visit to Sierra Leone showed me tattoos such as tiger, scorpio or a leaf marked on their bodies by the commanders. Mohammad S. Turay, a former child soldier in Sierra Leone told me in an interview:

> I was captured by the AFRC in Koinadugu district. I was fourteen. I was given RPG mortar. They forced me to kill my enemies. They tattooed me with the scorpio mark. I was with the AFRC for three years. Then I ran away with Alex, my commander. Then I was in Small Boys Unit with West Side Boys. WSB was very wicked to enemies. In 2000 I disarmed at Lungi camp. I learnt driving for three months. But I was not given license. Now I wash cars (Turay 2011).[125]

International agencies' sponsored plastic surgeons have been commissioned to rid the children of the "RUF" markings that were imprinted on their chests by the commanders. This may appear cosmetic, however it liberates these young people making them 'less of a target for discrimination' (Bass 2004:172). The stigma relating to former girl soldiers seems to be particularly complex. Girls appeared to not just suffer alienation due to their former association with the rebels, but also because several of them had been 'victims of sexual violence' (Denov 2005).[126] It may be pointed out that even though a number of families and communities did not accept former child soldiers, however, many former child soldiers including girls were accepted by their families or even the broader community.

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[125] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[126] Online Source

During my interview with Balu in Sierra Leone she said:

> I was eleven when I was captured by the RUF in Makeni. They gave me a machete and made me carry load. I was frequently gang raped. At eleven I was given a gun, AK 47. I followed orders to kill people. In 2002 I went through the DDR process. I was not ashamed to go through the DDR. My father accepted me but he is poor. But my step mother did not accommodate me. My neighbours and community accepted me. They never feared me. I stay with my aunt but I do nothing (Balu 2011).[127]

Another former child soldier called Boy Enjoy (name given by his commander), told me in an interview:

> I was captured by the RUF in Makeni. I was fourteen. I carried load and ammunition and did laundry. When I was fifteen I was given Berita short gun. I fired against my enemies. I did not go through DDR because of stigma. My parents were not happy that I was with rebels. But my parents were happy to receive me. They sent me to school and I am still studying (Boy Enjoy 2011).[128]

Human Security Approach to DDR

> The definition which addresses the new concept encapsulating a Human Security approach to the process, evolved in Sierra Leone in 2004 as "DDR is a concept which places weapons beyond use, in the context of improving community security through social and economic investment in the community." Such a definition identifies DDR as a concept rather than purely a process... a logistical operation... and infers a holistic movement in social engineering with strong linkages to all aspects of national recovery and the strengthening of Human Security (Molloy 2008:6).

Nevertheless, the changing paradigm of DDR as well as the development of the concept 'is a dynamic process' which is presently expanding to comprise deliberation of the function of the incentive of DDR in the mediation stage of a 'cessation of armed violence, in addition to the position of DDR in Security System Reform (SSR)' in post-conflict countries (Molloy 2008:6). As compared to Mozambique and a number of other DDR programmes in the 1990s, Sierra Leone did adopt a human security agenda in its DDR programme.

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[127] Personal interview with a former girl soldier in Sierra Leone
[128] Personal interview with a child soldier in Sierra Leone

Human Security and DDR of Child Soldiers

There seem to be no exact figures of child soldiers in Sierra Leone who at some point of time participated in the conflict (1991-2002) and/or were subsequently demobilised. Official statistics by the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reunification, and Reintegration (NCDDR) illustrate, 5,400 child soldiers were demobilised formally from the armed groups and armed forces in 2002 when the conflict came to an end. However, 'estimates of actual numbers of children who at some point actively' took part in combat range between 10,000 to 30,000. Several ex-child soldiers who were in the RUF ranks and other groups were young adults when the conflict ended and were demobilised as adults (Restoy 2006:3). However, according to one estimate the number of child combatants between 1998 and 2002 was 48,000 (Save the Children 2004:1). If this estimate is correct then Wessells rightly notes, just over 6,800 child soldiers participated in the DDR programmes, when compared with the estimated 48,000 child soldiers (Wessells 2006: 166).

Following are UNAMSIL's estimates of former combatants as it points out its achievements in Sierra Leone:

DDR's main achievements included- disarmament and demobilisation of 75,490 combatants, including 6,845 child soldiers (506 girls) and 4,651 women throughout the country; reintegration benefits to almost 55,000 ex-fighters which included skills training programmes, formal education as well as agricultural, fishery or entrepreneurial support; and collection and destruction of 42,330 weapons from the combatants. Further, most of the demobilised child soldiers were reunited with their families and some 3,000 child soldiers were absorbed into UNICEF's community educational programmes (UNAMSIL 2005).[129]

In Sierra Leone, it is estimated that 98 percent of demobilised children were reunited with their parents, relatives or close family members. Despite the high reunification figure, a number of reunited children in the country later drifted to other

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[129] UNAMSIL Online Source

areas, rather than reintegrating locally. This movement to other areas seems to be influenced by the need to find income or livelihood opportunities (Williamson 2005:4). Former child soldiers who did not have families were sent to foster homes. During my interview with Ambrose James from Talking Drums in Sierra Leone, he pointed out:

> Those child combatants who did not have families were sent to foster homes. In foster homes sexual abuse was quite prevalent. There were people preying on young children there. Some ex-girl combatants who were sexually abused in these homes became young mothers finding it extremely difficult to reintegrate into society due to stigma and they were confronted with the responsibility of bringing up a child in addition to looking after themselves (Ambrose 2011).[130]

Reintegration, as far as social acceptance is concerned, was relatively easier for those children who participated in the CDF. Throughout the conflict, most of them either stayed within their community, or nearby. Other villagers considered them as protectors. However, a large number of those children who had joined the CDF were not included in the demobilisation process, perhaps for political reasons. Therefore, they were barred from participating in the training and educational programmes that have been offered to other ex-child combatants. As far as child soldiers with the RUF are concerned, many communities were reluctant to accept them during the conflict and its immediate aftermath. The RUF had forced many of these child soldiers to kill their neighbours or even their own family members and these children had been staying in the bush and fighting for five or more years (Williamson 2006).[131]

As far as economic reintegration in concerned, there existed a number of flaws in the DDR programme which have been discussed above. Large numbers of former child soldiers were not able to get jobs even after completing skills training programmes. Further, it was reported that between 2000 to 3000 former child soldiers in Sierra Leone were subsequently engaged in heavy labour in diamond mines under harsh conditions (Wessells 2006:167). After the war, many child soldiers were disarmed however they became exploited workers 'in the same diamond fields they worked in, protected and fought over' during the conflict. Large numbers of them are not accepted by their

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[130] Personal interview in Freetown (Sierra Leone) with Ambrose James, Country Director, Talking Drums
[131] Online Source

families (Rosen 2005). James, the Talking Drums Country Director in Sierra Leone told me during an interview:

> Although majority of ex-child combatants were from rural areas, DDR focused on urban skills such as driving, carpentry, tailoring and so on, therefore there was a major drift from the countryside to the urban areas. There existed a mismatch between the skills training provided to ex-combatants and the opportunities available to them. Ex-child combatants were faced with a lot of competition as far as job opportunities were concerned. Further, the skills training programmes were for an extremely short period (James 2011).[132]

During my meeting with Bashiru, an ex-child combatant in Sierra Leone, he told me that many ex-child soldiers who were not able to learn the skill due to the brevity of the skills training programme sold their tool kits. According to Bashiru, while the DD was effective, the R was not that effective since it failed to transform many ex-child combatants. Bashiru argues:

> An ex-child combatant had a choice between choosing enrolment in school or enrolment in a skills training programme. I chose to go to school. However, only my primary education was funded and for my higher education (Bachelors in Political Science), no funds were provided by the government or international organisations. My mother is my major support system both emotionally and financially. She works extremely hard to pay for my higher studies (Bashiru 2011).[133]

Also, the DDR programme failed to meet the needs of other soldiers who had spent many years fighting as child combatants, but at the time of demobilisation were no longer below eighteen. It may also be pointed out that despite the shortcomings of the DDR programme, a number of former child soldiers with whom I interacted in Sierra Leone are satisfied with this programme.

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[132] Personal interview in Freetown (Sierra Leone) with James Ambrose, Country Director, Talking Drums
[133] Personal interview in Freetown with a former child soldier

But many were disappointed as well. Abdul Rahman Jalloh, a former child soldier in Sierra Leone told me:

> I was captured by the RUF at Kailahun. I was a driver. I went through DDR at Lungi. I learnt driving skill for six months. DDR gave me license. I am presently a driver. I am happy with DDR because of license. My parents and neighbours accepted me (Jalloh 2011).[134]

During my visit to Kono, the diamond mining region in Sierra Leone I interacted with around eleven former child soldiers. One of the former soldiers named Sahr Tamba in Koidu Town in Kono told me in an interview:

> I was fourteen when I was recruited by the Sierra Leonean army in Koinadugu district. They gave me AK 47. They forced me to kill enemies. They forced me to smoke *jamba* (marijuana). I went through DDR in 2001 or 2002. I learnt mechanic skills for four months. I was not given stipend during training. No *glady* (happy) with DDR but I am *glady* for the skill (Tamba 2011).[135]

Human Security and DDR of Girl Soldiers

Girls in Sierra Leone were recruited in various military factions, both rebel and pro-government forces, during the conflict (1991-2002). Large numbers of girls were kidnapped by the RUF to work as cooks, porters, spies, fighters or were taken as "wives". Many were used as sexual slaves and made to do domestic work. Girls often experienced torture, rape or sexual abuse. Not just the RUF but other armed militias in Sierra Leone (AFRC and Kamajors) also recruited girls in combat or non-combat roles.

In my interview with Rugged (as she was referred to by the commander), she pointed out:

> I was captured when I was six in Tonkolili district in Sierra Leone by a rebel commander from the RUF called RAMBO (he was one of the leading commanders trained by Foday Sankoh). At six I was frequently gang raped and was made to engage in cleaning and cooking. At the age of seven I was given a gun and received orders to shoot but I could not pull the trigger (Rugged 2011).[136]

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[134] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[135] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[136] Personal interview with a former girl soldier in Sierra Leone

In the civilian sector as well, large numbers of females were killed, tortured, raped, or otherwise brutalised, mostly by the RUF, and also by other groups (McKay 2004:162-163). In northern Sierra Leone, the RUF favoured girls as spies since, considering "local gender norms, they could move as 'vendors' " inside local markets, which happen to be rife not just with goods but with information and gossip as well. Besides, girls who were RUF commanders' wives often took care of younger, vulnerable women involved with the group (Wessells 2006:97).

Susan McKay observes, although most girl soldiers in Sierra Leone were kidnapped and subjected to repeated violence, after a while some of them gained power. For instance, some girl combatants in the country were empowered as they stood firm against sexual abuse, resisted command structure and authority and engaged in violent acts. Some girl soldiers with light weapons experienced 'a sense of power and control', which, at the time, they took pleasure in. There were other girls who associated themselves with commanders as "wives" and thus gained protection, status and power (McKay and Mazurana 2004).

While some girls used their power for the protection of the more susceptible in the camps, there were other girls who indulged in a high level of atrocities. Coulter observes, 'there has been little or no emphasis on' females as fighters and killers regardless of the fact that the wives of commanders were often in command of the infamous Small Boys Unit and the Small Girls Units (Coulter 2005:6). Likewise, the mammy queens happened to be some of the most brutal and commanding female combatants (Rosen 2005:70). They had names such as Lieutenant 'Cause Trouble', Lady 'Jungle Law' and 'Queen Cut Hands' (Macdonald 2008:136). However, many-perhaps most-girls are not empowered since they do not own weapons, they are not fighters, or are not advantaged by their position within a force (Wessells 2006:98).

Demobilisation of Girl Soldiers

In Sierra Leone, merely 506 girls, in contrast to 6052 boys, participated in the DDR programme. However, an estimated 25 percent of the child combatants were girls

(Wessells 2006:99). Significant under-representation of girls and women in the UN DDR processes illustrates the presence of organised structural violence in Sierra Leone. Some females argued that they avoided demobilisation due to poor physical and security conditions at demobilisation sites. Discrimination and protection threats, particularly attacks resulted in girls' lack of participation (Wessells 2006: 166). In Sierra Leone, after the conclusion of a decade-long armed conflict, presidential and parliamentary elections took place on 14 May 2002. According to a report by Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 62 internally-displaced females were interviewed when they voted: '53 rated peace and security as one of their top priorities and expectations from the newly elected (or re-elected) officials' (McKay 2004:158).

Quite often, girls were not given the opportunity to take part in the demobilisation process, mainly because they were not regarded as fighters and nor had any gun to present. Most of them were viewed as camp followers and not as combatants (CSC 2008).[137] More than 45 percent of ex-girl soldiers said they could not participate as they did not have a weapon (Wessells 2006:166). Other issues included crowding and as mentioned before, insecurity (Wessells 2006:166). As a result, they were deprived of benefits that could offer them opportunities to register in school and/or gain knowledge of marketable skills, hence contributing to their testing economic situation and their insecurity (McKay 2004:163). Moreover, some ICC's for children were situated close to the adult DDR encampment. This proved intimidating to some of the girls, and so did placing girls and boys together. In future DDR programmes, separate centers for girls and boys should be considered. Besides, centers for children need to be situated away from cantonment sites for adults linked with fighting forces (Williamson 2005:14).

DDR also excluded large numbers of ex-girl soldiers who were mothers with special needs (Wessells 2006:166). In Sierra Leone 300 girl mothers (those below eighteen when with child) who had been kidnapped by the RUF rebels and did not participate in the DDR process experienced resentment by their family and community when they came back with fatherless babies. Moreover, as they now make efforts to

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[137] Ibid

organise themselves and take part in economic activities, most of them (70 percent) have to move around with their babies since there is no one to take care of their children; those babies who are left with caretakers are poorly fed and cared for (Wessells 2006:102).

Girl mothers in post-conflict Sierra Leone who were kidnapped by the RUF explain that since they have come back to their communities, they have to 'beg for food to feed themselves' and their babies. They barely survive since they earn money only through low-paying jobs such as hair braiding, while others have to fall back on prostitution (McKay 2004:162). Further, demobilised child combatants in Sierra Leone did not have to pay their school fees and those schools where such children were accepted 'received a package of materials for all students'. Ex-girl combatants who did not demobilise officially 'did not receive the school fee waiver', nor brought additional benefits to the school (Specht and Attree 2006:224).

However, it is also important to note, a number of girls in Sierra Leone did not enter the DDR process either because their parents did not let them due to stigma or they themselves were ashamed to participate in the DDR process. During my interview with Rugged in Sierra Leone, she said that her parents did not let her go through the DDR because of stigma.

Reintegration of Girl Soldiers

In Sierra Leone, reintegration of girl soldiers was not an easy task. Girls were often rejected and stigmatised, rehabilitation and reintegration of former girl soldiers with babies born out of wedlock during the armed conflict became even more difficult. Most were not readily accepted by their family and the wider community. Girls and women in the country are scarred with social as well as psychological wounds of conflict. Due to social rejection, large numbers of girls have opted to live with their captors (Park 2009:159).

Of the 714 girls and young women included in the UNICEF's Girls Left Behind project, 494 wanted support in tracing their families, and 424 were eventually 'reunited

with either immediate or extended family members', even though many ultimately decided on leaving them. Some of the girls did not stay because they experienced stigmatisation by their community members as a result of their previous association (coerced or otherwise) with the armed militias. According to a UNICEF report, among girls previously associated with armed militias, many testified that while their parents as well as other immediate members of their family were pleased to receive them, response from the community was not always positive. Several girls experienced beatings, verbal abuse, and exclusion from community social life (Williamson 2005:14).

On the whole, the case of Sierra Leone underscores how the portrayal of girls is anchored in the fixed notions of them 'as objects not subjects', rather than a rational appraisal of reality. Postulations regarding gender issues and 'the patriarchal nature of the international system' imply that the girl combatant is overlooked since she does not fall into culturally acceptable notions of how a woman should conduct herself. 'The hierarchical submission of female to male' in the domestic as well as international realm is sadly a persistent assumption in contemporary social order and any attempt at defying "this binary opposition 'threatens the entire system' " (Macdonald 2008:137). Further, McKay observes, in West Africa, though excluded from negotiations and peace processes in the region, West African women members of the Mano River Women's Peace Network (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea) came together for the purpose of building peace, confidence and reconciliation, in their countries. These women organised themselves regionally, created networks, and discovered measures to help end the recurrence of armed conflicts that have plagued the region (McKay 2004:169).

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children notes, although the DDR programme in Sierra Leone has officially been considered to have immensely increased the country's security and is viewed as a model for other DDR processes, it nonetheless seems to have given scant attention to ex-girl soldiers, further contributing to the intensification of 'gender-based power differentiation into the current post-conflict era' (Denov 2005).[138] And most girl soldiers were ignored which resulted in human

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[138] Ibid

insecurity among those who were neglected. Girls made up around thirty percent of child soldiers in the conflict, yet just eight percent of the ex-child soldiers present in the DDR programme were female (CSC 2008).[139] SIPRI observes, 'an estimated 88 percent of girl soldiers were denied access to DDR programmes in Sierra Leone between 1998 and 2002' (SIPRI 2008:165).

Community-Based Reintegration and Traditional Healing in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leoneans demonstrated a high proclivity for reconciliation, derived from deep religious belief and exhaustion from the conflict. Local as well as international NGOs helped in building a grassroots movement that kindled reconciliation among conflicting factions (Ball et al. 2004).[140] Like Mozambique, in Sierra Leone too traditional reconciliation practices, such as cleansing ceremonies, had a positive influence on communities. Besides male and female former combatants, traditional methods were frequently extended to former child soldiers. In some cases, former combatants received clemency from entire communities once they confessed wrongdoing (Ginifer 2003).[141] Among the RUF, in particular, digging up of 'charms' was a common ritual. It is thought that progress in the community is not possible 'until charms are dug up and destroyed' (Arthy 2003).[142] Together with the TRC, local reconciliation programmes have assisted citizens to forgive those who carried out horrific acts, while bridging ties for a common future (Leff 2008: 27). However, in Sierra Leone traditional healing mechanisms were not used as much as in the case of Mozambique where traditional healing played a huge role in the reintegration of former child soldiers.

A study of 111 young women and girls in post-conflict Sierra Leone observed that community initiatives without local support have not been very useful in encouraging girls' protection, acceptance, and reintegration; besides, local communities were considered one of the major impediments in the reintegration of girls (Wessells 2006:100). While, in both Sierra Leone and Mozambique, rituals have helped sexually

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[139] Ibid
[140] Online Source
[141] Online Source
[142] Online Source

abused girls; in the case of Mozambique older women happened to be in charge of healing rituals (Bouta, Frerks and Bannon 2005:29).

Further, in Sierra Leone, the Community Reintegration Programme (CRP), supported by UK and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), a German aid organisation played a salient role in community-based reintegration throughout the country. It focused on adversely affected communities by creating social reintegration programmes and employment opportunities for former combatants (Leff 2008:25). Moreover, the community-based reintegration programme has assisted in reintegrating children with their families, peer groups and communities. This has been achieved through the development of community-level Child Welfare Committees and Children Clubs in addition to periodic follow-up visits by social workers from NGOs. These visits focus mainly on building the capacity of parents, community members and caregivers to help children adjust to community life and to perform normal social roles. Ensuring opportunities for children to go back to school or receive skills training has been a key factor in successful reintegration, enabling children to create a new identity, and increasing their acceptance by family members, peers and the community (Williamson 2005:16-17).

UNDP, while focusing on Tajikistan and Sierra Leone, observes, lessons from these countries imply that dialogue forums help all parties to talk about and contribute to forming programme design. It further asserts, in places such as Somaliland too where there is no central government, community participation in the planning of DDR can be extremely useful 'in assuring national ownership of the process, and more effective use of programme resources at the local level'. However, time constraints, can limit the depth and extent of the consultation process, particularly during the early period of a DDR programme (UNDP 2006:25) In the case of Sierra Leone, UNDP funded discussion forums pertaining to 'demobilisation and reintegration within an environment of reconciliation'. These forums helped the government, the army, religious and traditional leaders, donors, and civil society organisations to build 'a framework for national capacity-building in the context of peace-building'. This UNDP-led process aimed at

lessening tensions by raising transparency levels, relieving anxieties and elucidating intentions regarding political activities and military force. The process became the basis for the DDR and for restructuring of the armed forces (UNDP 2006:26).

CONCLUSION

Since the formal end of the war in 2002, Sierra Leone has managed to make considerable progress in re-establishing governance structures and strengthening the delicate peace in the country. This includes the establishment of a National Revenue Authority (NRA) which has developed revenue collection mechanisms; a continuing 'decentralisation process; justice sector reform programme; security forces subject to democratic control, and free and fair elections in 2002, 2004, 2007 and 2008' (Sola-Martin and Kabia 2007).[143]

Since 2007, when he came to power, Ernest Bai Koroma, the president of Sierra Leone, has been on a drive to attract investment. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts the country's GDP to grow at 5.2 per cent in 2011 and six per cent in 2012. Further, although a number of former child combatants I spoke with are still facing severe hardships, there are also those who have reintegrated reasonably well in society and many of them have been accepted by their families and communities. During my interview with Joe Turay from Caritas Makeni, he said:

> Around eighty per cent of the former child combatants have been reintegrated into society; in many cases they can hardly be identified as 'ex-combatants' (Turay 2011).[144]

Even though most people seem satisfied with the current All People's Congress government headed by President Koroma, yet, beneath the semblance of peace, discontent seems to be brewing among many young people due to a high rate of youth unemployment. Moreover, with 53 per cent of the 2011 budget financed by grants, Sierra Leone is still largely dependent on aid.

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[143] Online Source
[144] Personal interview in Freetown with Joe Turay from Caritas Makeni

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Further, according to the World Bank, Sierra Leone is being visited by neighbouring countries including the Great Lakes region because it is viewed as 'the best practice example throughout the world of a successful DDR programme' (Thusi 2004).[145] UN notes, the DDR programme 'significantly contributed to bringing sustained peace to Sierra Leone' (UN 2005).[146] However, there existed a number of flaws in the DDR. In Sierra Leone's DDR process child soldiers were officially included in the process. However, in practice the number of ex-boy soldiers actually demobilised was quite small. In Sierra Leone, officially it was not obligatory for child soldiers to hand over a weapon or to have had combatant status (Wessells 2006:165). However, most child combatants who participated in the DDR process said that they were required to hand over an automatic weapon (Wessells 2006: 166).

Only those combatants who had guns could go through DDR even though some child soldiers who were part of armed militias did not own guns and were therefore unable to enter DDR. In the DDR process, there were hardly any girls; a number of girls could not enter the process because they did not have a gun to hand over for the DDR. Some of the other factors which led a number of child soldiers to opt out of the DDR include stigma of enrolling in the programme. Some parents did not allow their children to participate in DDR. Mohammad Bah, known as the 'Dogman', told me in an interview:

> I was forcibly recruited at Kenema by the AFRC. My parents did not allow me to disarm because of the stigma (Bah 2011).[147]

Also, many in the provinces could not enroll in the DDR programme since they were required to travel to cities due to absence of DDR centres in a number of villages. Further, many former child combatants whom I interviewed were not happy with the DDR, while others were satisfied with it due to various skills-training programmes.

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[145] Ibid
[146] UN Online Source
[147] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

Anthony Brima, a former child soldier, from the Public Works Department (PWD), Pademba Road, Freetown in Sierra Leone told me in an interview:

> I went through DDR in 2002. It helped me learn mechanic skills for almost one year, but I could never concentrate on the skill because I was hungry. I never received any stipend during the skills-training programme, which the former child soldiers who entered the DDR programme were entitled to. DDR was a serious programme, but some of the people who headed it were not sincere (Brima 2011).[148]

Mohamed Conteh, an ex-child soldier from Pademba Road, who went through the DDR process pointed out to me in an interview:

> The staff at Bo gave my stipend to my group commander, but the latter never gave me the money. Moreover, no assistance was provided to me in getting a job (Conteh 2011).[149]

This is what the majority of former child soldiers who I interviewed in Sierra Leone had to say. Conteh further pointed out, the only benefits he received from DDR were a tool-kit and four months' skills training in mechanics. Further, some of the skills-training programmes were not sustainable. Aminata (name changed) narrated her story during my visit to Kono in Sierra Leone:

> I was just ten when I was forcibly recruited by the RUF in Kono district. In 2002, I disarmed in Kono and for around one year and six months I learnt soap-making through the DDR programme. I no longer engage in soap-making since it is very expensive. But DDR was effective because now I am out of that life and also learnt a skill through the DDR programme (Aminata 2011).[150]

It is important to note that some of the child soldiers did receive financial assistance during the skills-training programme. During the interview, one of the staff at UN Women in Sierra Leone told me that DDR was quite successful.[151] She was of the view that reintegration was also in a way successful. However, during my visit to the Special Court for Sierra Leone one of its staff pointed out while DD was successful, R wasn't really effective, he remarked 'how do you get these ex-combatants into the social

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[148] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[149] Personal interview in Freetown with a former child soldier
[150] Personal interview with a former girl soldier in Sierra Leone
[151] Personal interview with one of the UN Women staff in Freetown, Sierra Leone

network' which is an extremely difficult thing to do.[152] A number of local and international NGOs I interviewed in Sierra Leone echoed the latter view. Indeed, it may be argued that DDR in Sierra Leone, when it came to the rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers, had mixed results.

While disarmament was successful, demobilisation and reintegration programmes had many shortcomings- skills training programme mostly lasted few months, reintegration period was short-lived, and there were no monitoring mechanisms to assess ex-child combatants' post conflict situation. On the whole, it may be argued that it is time now to focus on the overall quality of the DDR rather than just emphasising on the quantity or the number of young soldiers demobilised. For successful rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers it is vital to incorporate the bottom-up approach to human security which focuses on cultural integrity, agency of child soldiers and involvement and empowerment of the local people.

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[152] Personal interview in Freetown with one of the staff of Special Court for Sierra Leone

Conclusion

The study examines the issue of child soldiers through the paradigm of human security. Several armed conflicts become intractable as they are sustained through the involvement of child soldiers. These conflicts possess the propensity of spilling over to the neighbouring states. Further, movement of child soldiers across borders may threaten state security. This demonstrates that state security and human security are interlinked. Therefore, it is imperative to focus on human security, unless the objective of human security is met, the state will continue to face instability and insecurity due to insidious threats such as violence, poverty, displacement, proliferation of small arms and so on.

Poverty, unemployment and proliferation of small arms are interlinked with armed conflict that leads to high civilian casualty rates, mostly women and children. This in turn forms a cycle of violence leading to further poverty, unemployment, and displacement. Wars often leave indelible scars within the minds of people, especially children and young people. And destruction of schools and basic infrastructure during wars deprives young people of leading a healthy and normal life. Those at the refugee or displaced people's camps are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and recruitment in the armed groups. As far as ex-child combatants are concerned, they find it difficult to reintegrate into civilian life with community acceptance being a major challenge. DDR programmes have often neglected child soldiers, especially girls. Therefore, it is imperative to view the issue of child soldiers and DDR from the perspective of human security.

Traditionally, DDR has given precedence to national security over human security, focusing mainly on disarmament and demobilisation while neglecting reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants. Further, a number of DDR programmes and peace accords in the early 1990s such as El Salvador and Mozambique did not incorporate a provision for child combatants. Angola's demobilisation exercise (1995 to 1997) was perhaps the first time that child soldiers were specifically included in a peace process. Though not explicitly outlined in the 1994 Lusaka Protocol, their demobilisation

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and reintegration was declared a priority (Verhey 2001).[153] In Angola integrated western and local healing methods were effectively used. The rehabilitation programmes were grounded within the local context and understandings of childhood and youth through the involvement of traditional structures such as clan networks and church groups. However, due to the collapse of the cease-fire agreement in 1998, some young people were re-recruited in the fighting forces (Honwana 2005). And the resumption of conflict in the country put an end to reintegration programmes; but their experience offers insights into effective reintegration approaches (Verhey 2001).[154]

It was in April 2002 that the war in Angola finally ended following years of fighting and intermittent ceasefires. Angola's national DDR plan had called for 'the integration of UNITA soldiers' into the Angolan armed forces, following their demobilisation. However, the Angolan army prohibited soldiers below eighteen; which led to the exclusion of child soldiers (Wessells 2006:163). The situation was even worse for girl soldiers, who mostly had not participated as combatants, were invisible during that time, and bore enormous psychological, social and economic burdens (Wessells 2006:163). In the mid-1990s, particular attention to child combatants in Angola was a result of intensive advocacy by varied stakeholders and the reports from neighbouring Mozambique of child soldiers' grievances regarding their denial of DDR benefits.

DDR of Child Soldiers in Mozambique and Sierra Leone: A Comparative Analysis

The study focuses on DDR programmes in Mozambique and Sierra Leone. Mozambique (1992-1994) is one of the earliest cases of DDR where soldiers below fifteen years of age as well as most girl soldiers were excluded from the DDR programme while in Sierra Leone (2002), child soldiers were officially included in the DDR process. The Sierra Leone case has been viewed as a model for the future DDR processes by the World Bank and the international community. The purpose of this research is to compare the two cases to see how far the DDR programmes have come since the early 1990s when the

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[153] Online Source
[154] Ibid

human security concept was not given much importance. Almost a decade later human security seems to have been given its due in Sierra Leone's DDR process. It is imperative to learn about the actual implementation of DDR and the place of human security in this process in Sierra Leone.

The UN's mission in Mozambique is viewed as a huge peacekeeping success. In Mozambique, Sant'Egidio, a Catholic lay organisation mediated the peace accord while the UN was brought into the peace process only towards the end (Krasno 2004:248). However, from the human security perspective the DDR in Mozambique cannot be regarded a success story. In Mozambique, disarmament and demobilisation were given precedence over reintegration. Child soldiers (those below fifteen years of age) were excluded from the demobilisation process and girl soldiers were marginalised. Reintegration programmes launched by some local or national NGOs such as Reconstruindo a Esperanca (Rebuilding Hope) and international organisations such as International Committee for the Red Cross and Save the Children Alliance helped a number of marginalised ex-child soldiers including girl soldiers reintegrate into society and these organisations were also successful to a certain extent.

Traditional healing methods and community-based approaches were successfully used in Mozambique. Referring to Mozambique, Carol Thompson points out, 'in 1983 and 1984, modern techniques were employed in centres, along side traditional ones, with the traditional proving itself to be more effective. At certain stages, psychologists have been involved to classify the degree of trauma, but healing has not occurred through psychoanalysis' (Thompson 1998).[155] However, it has also been pointed out that in Mozambique, integrated western and local healing methods were quite successful. For instance, the Mozambican non-governmental organisation, Reconstruindo a Esperanca (Rebuilding Hope) which worked with child soldiers is a testimony to the significance of the integrated approach to rehabilitation involving western therapy as well as traditional healing methods.

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[155] Online Source

In Mozambique, family reunifications were successfully carried out. The Tracing and Reunification Program in Mozambique was conducted by the Children and War Program established in 1988 and was carried out in seven of Mozambique's ten provinces (Honwana 2005). However, most child soldiers in Mozambique came back to communities that were severely devastated by the conflict, homes were burned down, infrastructure was destroyed, poverty and unemployment were rampant, and many child soldiers had lost their parents or families and friends during conflict. A number of ex-combatants including girl soldiers faced the problem of reintegration into communities because of their association with the fighting forces. Girl soldiers were confronted with gender-specific issues. Their reputations and consequently their marital prospects were blighted since many girl soldiers were used as sex slaves. Some were even girl mothers without wedlock. Therefore, many ex-child combatants migrated to neighbouring countries such as South Africa in search of jobs, some drifted into armed gangs, or ended up on streets.

For the purpose of my research work I was based in Freetown in Sierra Leone but I also travelled across the country (Bombali district, Kono district, Moyamba district, Port Loko district, Tonkolili district, Western rural and Western urban Freetown) effectively covering the Northern province, Southern province, Eastern province and Western province. With the help of *Fambul Tok,* I interviewed ex-child combatants in Makeni (Bombali district), Koidu town (Kono district) and Moyamba (Moyamba district). In western rural and urban Freetown, I carried out interviews on my own with former child combatants. Overall, more than seventy ex-combatants including girls (particularly child soldiers) were interviewed across Sierra Leone for my research. Other than this I met or interviewed various civil society (local and international organisations) and government organisations on post-conflict reintegration in Sierra Leone.

DDR in Sierra Leone, it may be argued, when it came to rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers had mixed results. Like Mozambique, in this case too, disarmament and demobilisation were given precedence over reintegration. In Sierra Leone, traditional healing mechanisms were not used as much as in the case of

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Mozambique where traditional healing played a huge role in the reintegration of former child soldiers. However, like Mozambique community-based approaches played an important role in reintegrating and rehabilitating child soldiers. In Sierra Leone, child soldiers were officially included in the DDR process. However, the number of child combatants who entered the DDR programme was quite small compared with the actual estimates of child soldiers. And like Mozambique, in Sierra Leone too girls were marginalised. Bangura, former DDR project officer in Sierra Leone told me in an interview:

> DDR, to a large extent was successful. However, at the same time it was shortlived, not well organised and well financed (Bangura 2011).[156]

As many civil society organisations who I interviewed during my visit to Sierra Leone pointed out 'DDR was done in a hurry'. On the other hand, according to one of the UN Women staff DDR was quite organised. However, like Bangura she says, there are no monitoring mechanisms to assess former child combatants' post conflict situation and according to Bangura ex-combatants have almost diffused within the community. But he continues, DDR was sixty percent successful because there is no more fighting and there is peace in the country.

Another extremely important issue in post war Sierra Leone was community acceptance which was a major challenge. Florella Hazelley, Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA) coordinator told me during the interview:

> Not enough was done to prepare the community to accept ex-combatants. And a lot of them cannot go back to their communities (Hazelley 2011).[157]

A number of ex-child soldiers I interviewed could not reunite with their families or reintegrate into their community for various reasons. Some were not accepted by their families or communities and some found it difficult to live with their families and communities so they left the provinces to find work in Freetown and landed up doing odd

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[156] Personal interview in Sierra Leone with Bangura, former DDR project officer
[157] Ibid

jobs. In the aftermath of conflict, some of the ex-combatants were employed in the diamond mines of Sierra Leone. In some cases, due to economic deprivation and lack of employment, reportedly some Sierra Leonean ex-child soldiers travelled to neighboring Liberia and Ivory Coast to join the fighting.

During my visit to Sierra Leone I interacted with a number of ex-child soldiers across the country (parts of Northern province, Eastern province, Western province and Southern province). One thing that struck me was that most former child combatants when asked if they attacked or killed civilians, they denied it. Most emphasised on the term "enemy", asserting that they attacked their "enemies" and not civilians. However, in most contemporary armed conflicts it is difficult to distinguish between civilians and combatants. Further, most former soldiers I interviewed said that they were forced to indulge in drugs which must have made it even more difficult for them to distinguish between civilians and combatants. As Akim in Sierra Leone said:

> With coke in my head I don't know how many people I killed. I burnt all things- village, children, everybody (Akim 2001).[158]

Another former child soldier named Johnny Davis told me in an interview:

> I was forcibly recruited by AFRC. I was RPG specialist at age fifteen. They forced me to kill people. They gave me a drug called morale booster which stays in the system for sixty days (Davis 2011).[159]

Some former child combatants, despite being on drugs during the conflict, underscored the term "enemy", asserting they only attacked or killed "enemies". This reflects that the armed militias must have adopted hardcore strategies to indoctrinate child soldiers. It seems a deliberate attempt on the part of the armed factions to influence children to associate with "their cause". Such strategies seem to have been adopted by RENAMO in Mozambique as well where children were forced to kill their family members or someone from their community so that they sever their ties with their family and the community and also come to associate with RENAMO's supposed "cause". Also even if these

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[158] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[159] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

children escaped the rebels they would not be accepted by their community. In the aftermath of conflict, these strategies in both Sierra Leone and Mozambique must have made it even for difficult for former soldiers to reintegrate into civilian life, while also influencing the communities' reluctance to accept them.

However, some local and international organisations in both Mozambique and Sierra Leone worked towards community reconciliation. In Mozambique, traditional healers played an integral role in community reconciliation. In Sierra Leone, some organisations adopted community and traditional reconciliation practices. And organisations such as Talking Drums, through various mediums including soap opera and radio programmes, were involved in helping build trust between ex-child combatants and the community in Sierra Leone. A number of former child soldiers in Sierra Leone who have reintegrated into society are now taxi drivers, *okada* (bike) riders, masons, musicians, carpenters, tailors, plumbers and so on. Some of them are students, with some like Bashiru whom I interacted with during my visit to Sierra Leone are pursuing higher education. Save the Children, Red Cross, Cause Canada and local NGOs were some of the organisations that were instrumental in reintegration of child soldiers while Handicap International was involved in healing or providing clutches to war amputees including civilians and combatants.

C. Conteh who was recruited at the age of eleven by the AFRC and had his leg amputated during the war, told me in an interview:

> There was no native doctor. I did not participate in the DDR. I gave my weapon to my junior to go through the DDR process. Handicap International provided me with clutches. I am very happy with Handicap International (Conteh 2011).[160]

War Child Holland, in its community-based programme, adopted a policy in Sierra Leone not to exclusively focus on former child soldiers but include entire communities affected by the conflict. This avoids stigmatisation of child soldiers while stimulating their

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[160] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

participation into the societies (CRC Sierra Leone 2009:6). In my interview with one of the staff from War Child Holland, I was told that the organisation refrains from singling out ex-child soldiers to avoid their stigmatisation in the communities.[161]

Unlike El Salvador, Mozambique and some other DDR programmes in the early 1990s, as mentioned previously, child soldiers were officially included in the DDR process in Sierra Leone. However, the number of child combatants who entered the DDR programme was quite small compared with the actual estimates of child soldiers, and girl soldiers were marginalised. While disarmament was successful, demobilisation and especially reintegration programme had many shortcomings - skills training programme mostly lasted few months, reintegration period too was short-lived, and there are no monitoring mechanisms to assess former child combatants' post-conflict situation. However, when compared with Mozambique (early 1990s), El Salvador (early 1990s), Angola (mid-1990s and 2002), and a number of other DDRs in 1990s, DDR in Sierra Leone made tremendous progress in reintegrating ex-child combatants.

It may also be pointed out that in the case of Mozambique although there is ample literature on the DDR programme, however, there does not exist enough literature on the DDR of child soldiers in the country, perhaps because those below fifteen years of age were not included in the DDR process. On the contrary, much has been written on the post-conflict reintegration of child soldiers in Sierra Leone. Despite this, the purpose of my field trip to Sierra Leone was to understand how far have the DDR programmes come since the early 1990s when DDRs such as Mozambique excluded child soldiers and to analyse the place of human security in these programmes. The idea was to understand the ground reality and actual implementation of the DDR programme in Sierra Leone which officially included child soldiers in the process. This could be possible only through my interaction with former child soldiers, the local people, local and international NGOs and government agencies.

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[161] Personal interview in Freetown (Sierra Leone) with one of the staff at War Child Holland

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of a comparative analysis between the DDR programmes in Mozambique and Sierra Leone following recommendations can be made.

Focus on Reintegration

While demobilisation is a short-term process, reintegration is a long-term process which goes on for years. Reintegration is a reciprocal process that entails not just the adaptation of ex- combatants but also the 'rebuilding of healthy families and communities', without which ex- combatants have few positive roles and alternatives (Wessells 2006:160). Therefore, it is imperative to focus on the reintegration aspect of DDR. Most DDR programmes give precedence to disarmament and demobilisation over reintegration. Even in the cases of Mozambique and Sierra Leone the DDR programmes were focused on DD while R was neglected. Although reintegration is a continuing process and requires ample resources and well designed skills training programmes for a sufficient period of time, most DDR programmes, even the most robust and well planned ones have been ineffective in providing enough resources over a period of time to post-conflict states.

While demobilisation is a military exercise watched over by international peacekeeping forces, reintegration is a civilian process led by UN agencies and civilian partners such as governments and NGOs. DDR processes necessitate coordination of the military and civilian elements since coordination gaps often adversely affect DDR efforts. Such gaps often emerge in funding since more funds are directed towards disarmament and demobilisation than towards reintegration. Children's DDR programmes are also adversely affected due to asymmetrical funding since these too are often poorly funded or neglected, a problem even more true for girls (Wessells 2006:161). Notwithstanding political pressures and the military background of many DDR planners, it is imperative that the planning and implementation of DDR programmes lay 'an overarching emphasis on reintegration' (Wessells 2006: 179).

Specific Needs of Girl Soldiers

Most DDR programmes have failed to take into account the specific needs of girl soldiers. They are mostly considered "camp followers" and not combatants. Although a number of them, either voluntarily or due to their parents' advise, do not enter DDR programmes in the aftermath of conflict, however, a range of flaws in DDR programmes also lead these girls to not participate in them. Some of these flaws are insecurity at the DDR camps and the condition of handing over a weapon so as to being eligible to enter the DDR programme. A number of girl soldiers do not possess a weapon. In some situations their commanders take away their weapon so that they cannot participate in DDR.

In Mozambique, there was no provision for children below fifteen in the DDR programme and girls were especially marginalised. In Angola (2002) too, child soldiers were excluded from the DDR and girl soldiers were also neglected. In Sierra Leone, one of the biggest flaws of the DDR programme was the failure to address the needs of girl soldiers. The DDR programme in the country failed to take account of the gender-specific roles carried out by girls and the 'complexity of their situations'. For instance, girls were viewed as "camp followers" and not as combatants. In some cases girls were held as sexual slaves and "bush wives" by their captors. In the aftermath of conflict, these girls were often not allowed to enter DDR by their former camp commanders (CSC Sierra Leone 2009:6).

Overall, it may be argued that DDR programmes should focus on the specific socio-economic needs of girl soldiers and also of girl soldiers with babies, taking into account the socio-cultural context. Quite often former girl soldiers are stigmatised and not accepted by communities. Sometimes parents and relatives also do not accept them because of their association with armed groups and their sexual reputations since a number of these girls are sexually abused by their captors or commanders and sometimes by other combatants in the group. Girl soldiers who are mothers are confronted with even more problems. They are stigmatised by communities, often they are abandoned by their

"husbands" who are former combatants themselves, and have double responsibility of taking care of themselves and their babies.

Therefore, it is imperative to engage the entire community in the reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers so that former child soldiers including girl soldiers are accepted by the communities. Approaches that involve communities may also be able to effectively address present and past sexual abuse of girls which often leads to severe physical health problems and psychological disorders. One major concern is the threat of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) since most girls who were associated with the fighting forces are purportedly infected, yet few are tested or treated. HIV and AIDS represent a major threat to these ex-girl soldiers and their children.

Child Protection from Re-recruitment

In the aftermath of conflict, ex-child soldiers who were either unable to enter the DDR programme and did not receive any DDR benefits or participated in flawed DDR programmes are vulnerable to re-recruitment in the neighbouring states which are marred by conflict. In 2005, reportedly children in Sierra Leone were being recruited to fight in neighbouring Liberia for the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). It was further reported that LURD sympathizers were on the lookout to recruit Sierra Leonean children to work in Liberia's diamond mines as a cover for a recruitment strategy (CRC Sierra Leone 2009:7).

In post-conflict situations, many ex-child soldiers who are unable to find sustainable employment and/or are shunned by their families or communities sometimes migrate to neighbouring countries or are vulnerable to join armed gangs. In post-conflict Mozambique, as mentioned previously, a number of marginalised ex-child combatants either moved to neighbouring countries like South Africa or drifted into armed gangs. Even during ongoing conflicts or in the regions where fighting continues, many child soldiers who escape armed groups or forces and are unable to earn a living or not accepted by their families or communities are susceptible to join new armed militias or begin engaging in criminal activity.

In Burma, children who escape from the government forces are considered traitors. Confronted with mostly negative options, such as joining another armed faction, they often look for work illegally in neighbouring countries, where they tend to live in fear of deportment (Wessells 2006:173). In 2004, Human Rights Watch reported that in Sri Lanka, children who escape the LTTE and go home are often re-recruited by the LTTE (HRW 2004b). Even if they are able to avoid re-recruitment, they would 'lack access to the reintegration supports' available in most official or formal DDR programmes (Wessells 2006:173). Wessells points out, the DRC offers a good example of the importance of DDR support for child soldiers in active conflict zones. Verhey noted in 2003 that international agencies such as Save the Children UK were offering the support in collaboration with UNICEF (Wessells 2006:177).

Since the conflict was ongoing, the DDR process included 'a strong emphasis on prevention of recruitment or re-recruitment' through training of military leaders on issues such as children's rights, protection of children, armed groups' responsibilities, and what should be done if there are children in one's armed group. This training focused not just on top commanders but on field commanders as well, since there often exists 'a gap between what top commanders say and what local field commanders do'. Field commanders are usually under the greatest pressure to recruit children. Identified child soldiers were demobilised and taken to Interim Care Centres (ICCs) which offered temporary safety and care and helped in tracing and locating families of these children (Wessells 2006:177). Setting up ICCs in the midst of armed conflict can prove quite beneficial for children, however, at the same time it is imperative to sensitise the local community to the purpose of these centres and also develop activities that benefit both ex-child soldiers and other children in the community.

Further, as far as ex-child soldiers in post-conflict situations are concerned, as Wessells points out, since child soldiers have distinctive needs, it is imperative that children have their own DDR process, legitmated and codified in the peace accord. Further, following ceasefire, DDR programmes should be implemented immediately without any delay, giving child soldiers access to positive alternatives so as to 'abandon

war as a way of life' (Wessells 2006:179). Further DDR programmes should involve comprehensive efforts for child protection and prevention of child recruitment or re-recruitment. It is critical to protect all children since in most conflict zones children are perhaps the most vulnerable to be recruited by fighting forces.

Drop the Weapons Criteria

One of the major flaws in the DDR programmes is the condition of handing over a weapon so as to being eligible to enter DDR. Some child soldiers especially girls soldiers do not possess a weapon. In some situations their commanders take away their weapon so that they cannot participate in DDR. In Sierra Leone, officially it was not obligatory for child soldiers to hand over a weapon or to have had combatant status (Wessells 2006:165). However, most child soldiers who entered the DDR process pointed out that they were required to hand over an automatic weapon (Wessells 2006: 166).

Only those combatants who had guns could participate in the DDR process even though some child soldiers who were associated with armed groups did not own a weapon. Consequently, they were unable to go through the DDR programme. In the DDR process in Sierra Leone, there were very few girls since a number of them did not have a gun to hand over for the DDR. During my visit to Sierra Leone a number of ex-child soldiers pointed out that they never participated in the DDR process since they were required to hand over a weapon to register for DDR and they didn't have one.

Musa Jahneh who carried ammunition for the RUF during the war told me:

> I never had a gun and never killed anyone. At the time of DDR I did not have a weapon so I could not enter the DDR programme (Jahneh 2011).[162]

Further, one of the major weaknesses of the DDRR process in Liberia (1996 and 1997) which was completed in just three months was its focus and emphasis on "gun-carrying combatants," which frequently excluded children and women (ICTJ 2009).[163]

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[162] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone
[163] Online Source

Access to Quality Education

Former child soldiers have usually missed out on education since a number of them are recruited when they are really young, some even as young as five or six and many conflicts even continue for decades. In the aftermath of conflict these former soldiers who are no longer children find it extremely difficult to make a living. Some of them do not have families to support them. Some are abandoned by their families and communities. Even those who are accepted by their families have a difficult time making their ends meet since the conflict has left the economy in ruins and the families themselves are struggling to survive. Therefore, for those ex-child soldiers who are interested in education they should be able to access quality education. Also during my visit to Sierra Leone, an ex-child soldier told me that the DDR programme in the country provided support only for primary education or only for few years to ex-child soldiers. Those former child combatants who wished to pursue higher education received no support. As mentioned previously, in an interview, Bashiru, an ex-child soldier in Sierra Leone told me:

> Only my primary education was funded and for my higher education (Bachelors in Political Science), no funds were provided...My mother works extremely hard to pay for my higher studies (Bashiru 2011).[164]

Therefore, those ex-child soldiers who are interested in higher education should be given some support so that they are able to pursue higher studies and do not have to constantly worry about the financial resources to fund their education. In fact due to lack of support a number of ex- child soldiers have to drop out of school, forget pursuing higher education.

Sustainable Skills Training Programmes

As far as vocational training for ex-child soldiers is concerned, it is vital that it leads to employment. It has been frequently seen in post conflict countries that even after completing a skills training programme a number of ex child combatants are unemployed and have difficulty making their ends meet. A typical flaw in a number of DDR and skills

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[164] Personal interview with a former child soldier in Sierra Leone

training programmes is to train many ex-child combatants for a specific job, which leads to major competition among them and this in turn renders many former child combatants jobless. This often leads to resentment among these jobless young people and generates economic hardships that leave them vulnerable to return to armed militias or engage in criminal activity. Another major flaw in a number of DDR programmes is that they do not seem to conduct a survey or a careful analysis of sustainability of skills training programmes being offered to ex-child combatants. One ex-girl soldier in Sierra Leone told me, through DDR she learnt soap making skill for one year and six months. However, she was not given a soap making kit and she had to 'sell her suit to buy caustic soda and palm oil to make soaps'. Now she no longer engages in soap making since palm oil is expensive. This clearly reflects how some of the skills training programmes offered by DDR were not sustainable. But she says, 'I am happy with DDR because now I am out of that life (military life with RUF) and have also learnt a skill'.[165]

As mentioned previously, James, the Talking Drums Country Director in Sierra Leone told me during an interview that although majority of ex-child combatants in Sierra Leone were from rural areas, DDR focused on urban skills such as driving, carpentary, tailoring and so on, which resulted in a major drift to the urban areas. He said, 'Agriculture was not made sexy' which in turn led to a shortfall in the agricultural sector.[166] Further, in a number of DDR programmes, after the completion of the skills training programme, no help is provided to ex- child soldiers in getting a job. In an interview with an ex-girl soldier in Sierra Leone, I was told she learnt soap making skill through the DDR programme. However, she was not given any stipend which former child soldiers were entitled to during the skills training programme. After the training, no help was provided to her in getting a job. This is what the majority of over seventy ex-child soldiers who were interviewed during my visit to Sierra Leone had to say. Further the skills training programmes in Sierra Leone were for an extremely short period.

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[165] Personal interview with a former girl soldier in Sierra Leone
[166] Personal interview with James Ambrose, the Talking Drums Country Director in Sierra Leone

Considering the above flaws in the job or skills training programmes, it is imperative to make these programmes more comprehensive and holistic by conducting a careful analysis of sustainability of skills training programmes, taking into account the economic and social context of the state; providing help to ex-child soldiers in getting a job; and increasing the period of the skills training programmes.

Funding Support

Most DDR programmes suffer from shortage of funds. This is especially true for DDR programmes in Africa. For instance, in the Liberian disarmament programme a severe funding shortage left tens of thousands combatants vulnerable to missing out on education and job training, and also left them in danger of re-recruitment to take part in future armed conflicts. The neighbouring Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone also experienced the same problem. One of the UN Women staff in Sierra Leone also pointed to the funding constraint in the Sierra Leone DDR programme. She said the financial assistance for DDR was short lived.

As mentioned previously, Child Soldiers Global Report 2008, points out, in DDR programmes continuous funding for long-term is rarely available (CSC 2008).[167] A number of countries such as Afghanistan, Burundi, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Southern Sudan have reported inadequate provision for long-term reintegration. In Guinea too, due to lack of funds, large number of combatants did not benefit from the DDR programme. In the DRC, due to delayed, unpredictable and short-term funding, accompanied with poor planning and mismanagement, around 14,000 former child soldiers were excluded from reintegration support. Towards the end of 2006, roughly four years following the commencement of the DDR programme, nearly 'half of the total 30,000 children demobilised had not received' reintegration support. In addition, international funding had almost stopped (CSC 2008).[168] It is important to note, without adequate funding, the DDR programmes will not be very efficient.

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[167] Child Soldier Coalition Online Source
[168] Ibid

As compared to the disarmament and demobilisation, reintegration programmes often experience shortage of funds. While disarmament and demobilisation are short-term, reintegration is a long-term programme which continues for years since it takes a long time to build socio-economic fabric of a war-ravaged state and reintegrate and rehabilitate both the ex- combatants and communities. Therefore, if reintegration programmes are poorly funded, it would be extremely difficult to effectively rehabilitate the war-affected (both the civilians and combatants) and build the socio-economic fabric of the state.

Bottom-up Approach to Human Security

For successful reintegration of child soldiers, it is imperative for DDR programmes to incorporate the bottom-up approach to human security which focuses on the local socio-economic context, agency of ex-child soldiers (both boys and girls), involvement and empowerment of local people and communities and participation of local NGOs. In fact for sustainable post-conflict peace, it is essential to adopt community-based rehabilitation of child soldiers.

Mozambique is a good example of the role played by traditional healers and community-based organisations. It is important to note, the formal DDR programme in Mozambique did not give much attention to human security, its focus being mainly short-term development which adversely affected long-term reintegration of former soldiers, particularly children and among these children girls were neglected the most. However, traditional healers and community mechanisms were critical in healing the wounds of former child soldiers. It may be argued here, while resorting to traditional healing mechanisms it is essential to determine how genuine are the traditional healers who are being employed to rehabilitate child soldiers. As far as Sierra Leone is concerned, according to Joseph Turay from Caritas Makeni in Sierra Leone, DDR was mainly top-down and western therapy played a critical role in the rehabilitation of former combatants.[169] Traditional healing mechanisms were not used at a large scale and western approach dominated the DDR process in the country. However, it may be pointed out that

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[169] Ibid

some international and local NGOs adopted community-based approach to reintegration of former soldiers.

The initial hypotheses of this study were as follows:

1. DDR programmes have failed to achieve the objectives of human security due to a standarised approach insensitive to context(s).

2. Adult-driven DDR in Mozambique contributed to human insecurity, while child-specific DDR in Sierra Leone achieved partial progress, though largely undermining the goals of human security.

This study corroborates the first hypothesis. After interacting with over seventy ex-child combatants in Sierra Leone it came across that even relatively well-designed DDR programmes have failed to focus on the socio-cultural context. Traditional healing mechanisms did not play that important a role in Sierra Leone. However, some organisations adopted traditional healing practices in the community reconciliation ceremonies. Moreover, the DDR was mainly top-down, even though later a number of local NGOs and communities got involved in post-conflict reintegration and rehabilitation. During my interview with him, Bangura, former project officer DDR in Sierra Leone pointed out, DDR in Sierra Leone followed the diktats of the international community. Further, most DDR programmes have failed to address the specific needs of girl soldiers, particularly girl soldiers with babies. Like Mozambique, in Sierra Leone too, they are mostly considered "camp followers" and not combatants and thus excluded from the DDR programme.

The study also corroborates the second hypothesis. Adult-driven DDR in Mozambique did contribute to human insecurity for former child soldiers and the community. This is because due to their exclusion from the DDR programme a number of former soldiers drifted into armed gangs, slipped into neighbouring countries or ended up on streets. Some girls even got involved in prostitution. This posed a threat to human

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security. Further, in the case of Sierra Leone, the child-specific DDR in Sierra Leone achieved partial progress. Unlike Mozambique child soldiers were officially included in the DDR process in Sierra Leone. However, the weapons criteria was a major drawback for both boy and girl soldiers. A large number of child soldiers could not enter DDR because they did not have a gun to hand over. In Sierra Leone, while disarmament was successful, demobilisation and especially reintegration programme had a number of flaws - skills training programme mostly lasted few months, these programmes did not necessarily lead to employment, reintegration period too was short-lived, lack of resources for reintegration of former child soldiers was a major setback and there are no monitoring mechanisms to assess former child combatants' post-conflict situation. However, when compared with a number of other DDRs in the 1990s and even today, DDR in Sierra Leone made tremendous progress in reintegrating ex-child combatants.

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