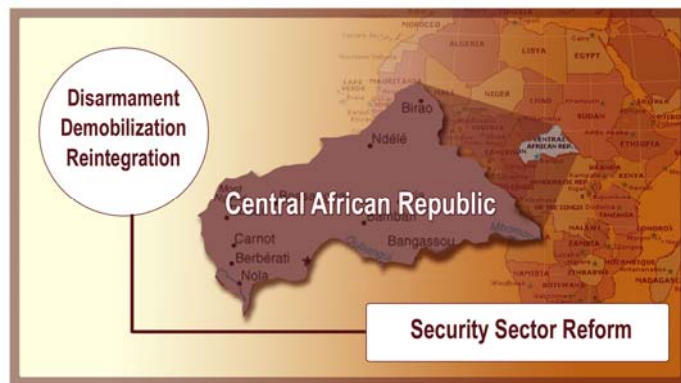


CAR: MDRP Launches Regional Study on SSR-DDR Links

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The Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) has begun a major effort to examine the links between disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs and security sector reform (SSR). The effort kicked off in the Central African Republic (CAR), where experts from the World Bank and MDRP recently concluded a mapping of SSR efforts in that country. The mapping resulted in preliminary recommendations for how MDRP can better support security sector reform through its programs, and how the

World Bank and MDRP partners can support SSR outside of the MDRP framework.

The “security sector” refers to all state institutions with a role in protecting the state and its citizens – such as the army or the police – as well as those bodies that oversee these institutions – such as a Defense Ministry. Reforming this sector generally involves a move towards more democratic and transparent security and defense systems and practices. This can involve a huge range of issues, from threat assessments, to national security strategy formulation, to the size and hierarchy of the national army, to security personnel treatment of citizens, to defense budget management.

Why is MDRP concerned with SSR? The simple reason is that the reform of the security sector can be central to the success of demobilization and reintegration, and vice versa – DDR programs are inextricably linked to broader security sector reform. For example, a number of peace agreements provide for integration of different armed movements into a national force, dismantlement of armed groups, and assistance to former combatants who do not remain with the new defense and security forces.

MDRP-supported DDR programs and SSR efforts share the objective of contributing to countrywide and regional processes toward peace and stability. And to succeed, both DDR and SSR also require many of the same preconditions – cease-fire agreements, confidence-building measures, positive political will and progress, among others.

“Both SSR and DDR processes also often share certain steps,” adds Madjior Solness Dingamadji, MDRP Senior Social Development Specialist and DDR expert. “For example, SSR may lead to the demobilization of children associated with armed forces, early retirement of excess military personnel, screening for HIV/AIDs, and other tasks. SSR decisions, such as army size, integration criteria for those combatants who join national armed forces, the extent of new recruitment, and so on, will also greatly affect DDR program details such as demobilization targets, budget allocations or eligibility criteria for DDR beneficiaries.”



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Dingamadji reports that the CAR pilot mission of the study went well. “CAR authorities treated the issue of security reform as a priority,” he says. “We met with the Minister of Defense, the Prime Minister and half of his cabinet, and also held extensive consultations with the National Assembly, civil society, BONUCA, donors, UN agencies, and other stakeholders.”

Preliminary findings suggest that the CAR faces significant challenges in terms of its security sector. Furthermore, many citizens do not have a great deal of confidence in the state to ensure their safety. Light arms are rampant, contributing to this sense of insecurity.

That said, it would seem that the MDRP-financed Demobilization and Reintegration Program (PRAC, in French) has at least made some contribution to reducing the risk of renewed conflict in the Central African Republic. The PRAC has already demobilized 5,515 ex-combatants and reintegrated 5,176 into their communities out of the total target of 7, 565 individuals. The remaining 2050 have been identified and will benefit from the program before its scheduled closing in February 2007.

“However, these gains will not be permanent unless broader security sector issues are addressed,” Sigrun Aasland, Operations Analyst in the MDRP Secretariat, says. “The World Bank does not have the mandate or the expertise to support security sector reform. For instance, we cannot fund or carry out disarmament, but must rather work with other partners who can. Such constraints make coordination between partners intervening in DDR and SSR actors all the more vital. We hope that the MDRP study will reveal what DDR-SSR links exist and what links need to be reinforced or created.”

Participants in the study recommend improved and expanded support from the international community for SSR through a comprehensive and long-term plan. They also recommend that the MDRP itself help the World Bank think about how better to support SSR in the Central African Republic, the Great Lakes and beyond.

“The Bank can, for example, offer significant support to specific aspects of SSR, such as public finance management of defense budgets, and censuses of defense and security forces personnel,” Aasland explains.

The MDRP will meanwhile encourage its own donors and partners to engage bilaterally in SSR-related activities such as training, infrastructure, threat assessment, equipping, etc.

Next country case studies are likely to be in the Republic of Congo and the Republic of Burundi.

“This study will fill a large gap in research and provide policy and operational guidance to key stakeholders in the Great Lakes region,” says Bernard Harborne, World Bank Lead Conflict Adviser for Africa. “Demobilization and reintegration programs support security processes in fragile war-to-peace transitions. In return for international support to DDR programs, partner governments in the sub-region have committed to developing policies to carry out security sector reform. This research will identify in what ways the Bank, within its own mandate, and MDRP partners, can support government capacities to provide national and human security which is affordable, sustainable, and accountable.”

For more information on MDRP, please visit www.mdrp.org or contact Bruno Donat, Communications Officer, MDRP Secretariat, World Bank at info@mdrp.org.