Chapter Five

South Africa’s Experience of DDRRR

5.1 Introduction

The institutional framework for the DDRRR in South Africa process was influenced and structured through negotiated settlement talks between the African National Congress (ANC) and National Party —that left the defence forces intact⁶⁰¹— and provided by the state. South Africa’s DDRRR process was largely locally owned and directed. It took place in the post Cold War period as part of the country’s political transition from apartheid to democracy. There was no direct role of the international community in the DDR process that was managed by national authorities. The UNHCR was belatedly invited by the apartheid government to assist with the repatriation operation. The facts that the South African process was engineered by South Africans with little foreign involvement after the Cold War makes it an attractive comparable case to Zimbabwe and Namibia’s models that were brokered by the Commonwealth and UN respectively.

An internal Transitional Executive Council (TEC), created at the recommendation of the South Africa Multi-party Negotiating Forum,⁶⁰² supervised South Africa’s transition to democracy. A key sub-Council on Defence was established and tasked with first, overseeing the integration and second, the demobilization of distinct conflicting statutory

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⁶⁰² The settlement of South Africa’s conflict was concluded in a series of minutes and accords. These
and non-statutory forces in order to create an efficient and politically acceptable national force structure. A Joint Military Coordinating Committee (JMCC) consisting of representatives from all the parties and chaired in rotation by the South Africa Defence Force (SADF) and ANC’s *Umkhonto weSizwe* (MK) designed the initial integration process. The Integration Committee replaced the JMCC in the post-election period.

In 1994, against the background of resistance and dominance of the old SADF, BMATT was invited by the government to assist in the transformation of the national defence force according to international standards. After the 1994 elections the government embarked on an incidental demobilization and reintegration programme for personnel made redundant during the establishment of the new defence forces.

South Africa’s transition to democracy- and by extension military integration and DDR- was locally negotiated and planned. Nevertheless, the international community registered its presence with the UNHCR playing an instrumental role in the return of South African refugees, including unarmed MK cadres, ahead of the 1994 multiparty elections. In 1994, Ambassador Joseph Nanven Garba observed:

> There will be no counterpart to the UN role in Mozambique, Angola, or Namibia. South Africans of all political stripes (persuasions) seem to agree on this and insist that their transition is a homegrown process that they have devised and want to control. But they have allowed an international presence unimaginable even two years ago, and this may open the way to understanding that there is much, quite beyond “lessons,” that the region and Africa in general have to contribute.  

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For instance, at its December 1993 session, the TEC adopted a resolution of the Multi-party Negotiating Council requesting that the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the European Community, the Organization of African Unity and individual governments provide adequate international observers to monitor the electoral process. It also appealed to the UN to coordinate all international observers and to ensure that their deployment was effectively coordinated through close cooperation with the Independent Electoral Commission. In view of the fact that the international community had applied effective international sanctions against the apartheid regime, in support of the anti-apartheid movement, it was only natural that South Africa’s DDRRR was also carried out under international telescopic spotlight.

This chapter assesses how the local institutional framework for South Africa’s DDRRR and its perceived in-depth understanding of local political and social contexts carried out its task. It starts by examining how the country-specific preceding conflict and conflict terminating negotiations impacted the formulation and implementation of the DDRRR process. The chapter identifies that the conception and establishment of a post-apartheid military structure that has shaken off its gruesome apartheid hue was a strong feature of the multi-party negotiations and transitional arrangements for the country’s transition to democracy. South Africa’s DDRRR model prioritized the integration of all military personnel and then rationalization of redundant soldiers. A comprehensive conceptual framework for those who, due to various reasons, could not integrate was not in place at

of the “Restructuring the Security Forces for a New South Africa Conference,” held at Harare, Zimbabwe,
the time. Since the DDR process was connected to the establishment of the new SANDF a brief outline of the latter process is given. While the envisioned SANDF was strongly part of the multiparty negotiations the chapter points out that the planning of a comprehensive DDR process was postponed at the start of these talks. It then focuses on how the lack of vision, planning, institutional and managerial competencies militated against an effective demobilization and reintegration process.

Focus on the UNHCR’s repatriation programme that assisted a fraction of the estimated 40 000 South African returnees follows. The specific social, economic and politico-military contexts under which the national authorities implemented DDR are also found to have impacted the process. The chapter reviews how the above impacted the formulation, implementation and outcome of South Africa’s DDRRR. The process’s contribution to peace building is then discussed. This is followed by a section that deals with the new initiatives that are being planned by the government and ex-fighter organizations to rectify the inadequacies of the demobilization and reintegration strategy.

5.2 Preceding conflict

South Africa’s anti-apartheid struggle involved the liberation movements - African National Congress (ANC), Pan African Congress (PAC) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) - against the apartheid-South Africa regime. It can be broken down into three distinct phases:

January 26-28, 1994
Constitutional/ Political anti-apartheid struggles (1912-1948)

Non violent mass action and civil disobedience (1948-60s)

Armed antiapartheid struggle (1961-1990)

Between 1912 and 1948 the struggle maintained a peaceful political and diplomatic focus. The apartheid regime’s thwarting of political transition through negotiations resulted in the nationalist movements’ resort to armed revolutionary struggle in the 1960s. The armed wings established by the liberation movements were later classified as Non Statutory Forces (NSF) during the negotiations and subsequent DDR process. This categorization as NSF impacted on the post-conflict integration and DDR of the NSF combatants.

The ANC’s MK was launched on 16 December 1961, marking the start of a protracted, low intensity struggle until the formal declaration of a ceasefire on 6 August 1990. MK received armaments from Russia, China and Cuba; some of which were then smuggled into South Africa. MK efforts to establish a significant and coordinated military presence inside South Africa were frustrated by the apartheid regime’s formidable counter-insurgency and counter-infiltration strategies. Many MK fighters were, thus, mainly based in exile including in Angola and Zambia. This meant that they were to be repatriated after the suspension of armed activities and in advance of the reintegration plan.
MK’s strategy revolved around sabotage acts against perceived strategic government targets such as rail and power lines. Landmines were also laid by the MK in rural areas in order to deter SADF patrols. Armed activities were complimented by “Mass mobilization, underground organization and international solidarity work” as part of a “four-pillar” strategy. MK was relatively small. In 1990, MK’s strength was estimated at 12 000. While MK officially ceased armed liberation activities in 1990 it, however, continued its recruitment drive in preparation for a new South African defence force. This might explain why MK’s Certified Personnel Register (CPR) submitted at integration included 26 000 fighters. At the time of the negotiations the ANC, had also heightened the process of infiltrating its forces into South Africa, marking “a transition from an external guerilla activity to underground internal activity.”

APLA - Azania Peoples Liberation Army, PAC’s military wing, was launched in 1968. It also engaged in diverse anti-apartheid military strategy and tactics ranging from attacks against the government’s security and local government personnel, Maoist guerilla strategy. APLA had between 6 000 and 8 000 fighters.

The SADF were complemented by the armed forces of the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC) homelands. The involvement of varied armed formations in South Africa’s anti-apartheid struggle meant that the country had a heterogeneous ex-

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604 L. Mashike and M. Mokalobe, Reintegration into Civilian Life: The case of former MK and APLA combatants, TRACK TWO, Vol 12 No 1, p.10
607 Interview with Francis Kornegay, Senior Researcher, Centre for Policy Studies, 29 November 2004,
fighter population to deal with under its DDR process. The TBVC armies were small in number (less than one-third of the forces meant for the new SANDF) and shared military cultures and structures with the old SADF. This meant that it was easier for the former TBVC to integrate. Unsurprisingly, the incorporation of TBVCs into the SANDF was “reached relatively quickly, efficiently and effectively.”

A major feature of the anti-apartheid conflict was that there were limited military engagements between the larger and sophisticated SADF and liberation armies inside South Africa. Jacklyn Cock described South Africa’s conflict as a “low-level civil war”. As shall be shown later the fact that armed conflict was low-key might have inadvertently resulted in the low emphasis on the planning and execution of DDR.

Another notable dynamic of the conflict was the mutual tension that existed among the liberation movements. Sasha Gear noted that South Africa’s conflict “cannot always be described within the parameters of the bi-polar conflict between the forces for and against apartheid. South Africa’s conflicts also manifested in violence between those claiming to fight for the same ends – namely, a democratic dispensation.” Gear uses the discord between the ANC and Inkatha Freedom Party and also conflict between the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Azanian Peoples Organization (AZAPO) supporters as reference points. This meant that South Africa’s liberation movements were not a

Johannesburg

610 S. Gear, Wishing us Away: Challenges Facing Ex-combatants in the New South Africa, Violence and
homogenous and harmonious entity. It was mainly the liberation fighters, later legally distinguished as Non Statutory Forces, who were demobilized in the immediate post-conflict period. The war-time rivalry among the liberation movements has contributed to frustrate the establishment of a unitary national military veterans association. The absence of a national association, through which ex-fighters can channel their needs and concerns, has in turn impacted the long-term effective reintegration of ex-fighters.

Apartheid politics in South Africa also created a refugee population. The outflow of refugees or political exiles was most significant from the mid-1960s when anti-apartheid movements were banned in South Africa and their leaders imprisoned. In the 1970s and 1980s, and particularly after the 1976 Soweto Youth uprising, many anti-apartheid activists sought refuge in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Others later joined the ANC leadership in exile, in Tanzania or Zambia. Lesotho, for instance, hosted about 4 000 official refugees from South Africa, while there were 7 000 in Swaziland and several thousands in Botswana. Many exiles did not officially request asylum under the auspices of the UNHCR and the host-governments for security reasons. The UNHCR estimated the total South African refugee or exile population at 40 000. These had to repatriate once the transition from apartheid to democracy gathered pace.

Transition Series, Vol. 8, 2002, p.8

5.3 The Multiparty Negotiating Framework and DDR

Several studies on demobilization and reintegration highlight the need to plan DDR at the earliest stages of a peace negotiation process.\textsuperscript{612} However, in South Africa’s case it would appear that the military discussions, under the political settlement-inclined Multiparty Negotiations, emphasized a military blueprint for the delicate establishment of a unitary national defence forces. This was important as part of a broader strategy to ensure control of the levers of the new state in an uncertain political environment. During the negotiations “the National Party’s approach, which was to ‘ring-fence’ defence from the political process as a guarantor of stability or viewed in another way, of entrenched interests”\textsuperscript{613} prevailed. Philip Frankel makes an important point: “Ironically, the power of the SADF became the guarantor the political system that the ANC sought to inherit, and once MK leaders absorbed this point (as they quickly did), any further talk of radically transforming the military in the foreseeable future was reduced to empty if politically correct public verbiage.”\textsuperscript{614} During the negotiations “the ANC saw themselves as a government in waiting. They did not want to inherit a dysfunctional military or anything. They had (a) vision of the nation, that is, they wanted to integrate them into one, national, unified army.”\textsuperscript{615} Garth Shelton also observed:


\textsuperscript{615} Interview with Dr Chris Landsberg, Director, Centre for Policy Studies, 29 November 2004,
Establishment of the new military was the priority. Bring the new military together and then we will solve the problems later. My feeling is that this short-term planning means that you will have serious problems ten years later. They did not plan for retirements, demobilization. They planned for increasing the military forces. They did not plan for decreasing.616

Due attention was, however, not accorded to the superfluous ex-fighters who were made redundant during the process to establish a new defence force. Thabiso Radebe, MK Military Veterans Association Financial Director, stated: “Most cadres followed the process of negotiations. When we talk of military agreements, including integration and demobilization, the ANC and MK struck a raw deal. It was not properly negotiated at all.”617

In addition to the political goal mentioned above there could be several explanations for the subdued emphasis on DDR. First, South Africa’s preceding armed conflict was of a low intensity and subordinate to political activity. Second, the compromise multiparty negotiations revolved around trade-offs among the various stakeholders who possessed different military capacity. Third, the liberation movements could not secure a solid military leverage on the ground which made a politico-military pact all the more attractive. Nelson Mandela wrote that “negotiations with the (apartheid) government were not armistice talks in which we (ANC) could dictate terms to a defeated enemy. It would probably take years for the ANC to control the levers of the government, even

Johannesburg
616 Interview with Prof. Garth Shelton, International Relations Department, University of the Witwatersrand, 3 December 2004, Johannesburg
Director, Centre for Policy Studies, 29 November 2004, Johannesburg
617 Interview with Thabiso Radebe, MK Military Veterans Association Financial Director, 12 April 2005, Johannesburg
after an election. An ANC government would still require much of the present civil service to run the country.”618  In interviews, commentators, stressed:

If you look at what was happening the struggle was basically fought outside the country, the guerilla forces were based outside the country. Very few people were sent into the country as underground operatives. There was no major armed conflict within the country except in the townships but those people in the townships were ordinary activists. In a way that argument that most people have made, and that I agree with, is there is no sense that we were involved in armed conflict and because of that people tended to take it lightly in terms of the demobilization and the reintegration process.619

There was no miracle. It was nothing other than elite-pacted negotiations where elites from both sides agreed. There were compromises from both sides. It wasn’t a winner-take-all situation. There were so many stakeholders, broadly defined, who made gains (while) others...made a loss. Therefore given the nature of the struggle and the fighters we were talking about one of the key issues was how to amalgamate all structures of the SADF, ANC, PAC and move on. The entire negotiation was not really fair to a number of people in the struggle for the sake that most who were demobilized...no thinking was implemented in a way that satisfied them.620

On the one hand there is a sense of frustration that was felt by many of the fighters and I haven’t heard about this recently but closer to the time we would hear how people had sort of been prepared and wanted to fight for their country and what they believed in and they felt the negotiated settlement was a little bit of a sell-out and that they had not been given the opportunity...I also think that it impacted on the reconciliation process where there have been such different levels of engagement with the political process. So a big feeling has been that, while the very highest echelons of the different groupings were making agreements for peace, the foot soldiers were sort of left behind, not consulted and disregarded in the process.621

Notwithstanding the strategic and practical motivations of inheriting a functional army the MK leaders expended little effort to inform the “foot soldiers, who continued to be

619 Interview with Lephopho Mashike, Sociology Department, University of the Witwatersrand, 27 September 2004, Johannesburg
620 Interview with David Monyae, International Relations Department, University of the Witwatersrand 27 September 2004, Johannesburg
621 Interview with Sasha Gear, Researcher, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 22 September 2004, Johannesburg
fed on a far more heady and appetizing diet”\textsuperscript{622} and this “quickly translated into widespread suspicions that the rank-and-file had been sacrificed on the altar of political expediency.”\textsuperscript{623} This gained currency given the general perception that South Africa’s settlement process were “‘dominated by elitists’, such as church leaders, politicians and business leaders and that perspectives of grass-roots groups were not included by the third parties and those mediating (in) the conflicts.”\textsuperscript{624}

The limited emphasis on DDR is also evidenced by the mandates given to the structures established to supervise military aspects of the transition to democracy. The TEC, which was formed at the recommendation of the South Africa Multi-party Negotiating Forum, was tasked with supervising South Africa’s transition to democracy. A key Sub-Council on Defence (SCD) was established and tasked with the military aspects of the transition. This included first, overseeing the establishment of the new SANDF and second, the demobilization of distinct conflicting statutory and non-statutory forces in order to create an efficient and politically acceptable national force structure.\textsuperscript{625} South Africa’s DDR model thus involved the integration of all military personnel and the demobilization of those who did not meet the criteria for integration or were unwilling to join up.

The authoritative TEC aimed at facilitating and promoting the transition to democracy in

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\item \textsuperscript{622} P. Frankel, \textit{Soldiers in a Storm: The Armed Forces in South Africa’s Democratic Transition}, (Boulder, Westview Press, 2000), p.21
\item \textsuperscript{624} Group Interview with SA-Gr2, Port Elizabeth, August 19, 1999 in J. Cilliers, \textit{Local Reactions to Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and South Africa}, (DPhil Thesis, George Mason University, 2001), p.269
\end{itemize}
South Africa. The SCD was thus supposed to create and encourage a climate for free and fair political participation and elections. Its tasks can be summarized as follows:\footnote{626}{"Military on the move", \textit{PARATUS}, February 1994, Vol 45, No 2, p.10}

- To ensure that no armed forces jeopardized the objects of the TEC
- Investigation of alleged violations
- The compilation and enforcement of a code of conduct
- To do research into all aspects of a future defence force
- To supervise all planning, preparation and training for a future defence force
- To keep all armed forces informed of military developments
- To provide for the reception and daily maintenance of such elements of NSFs who reported to the assembly points before the April 1994 elections
- To establish and oversee the employment of a national peacekeeping force

The eight members of the SCD of the TEC enjoyed the status of Deputy Cabinet Ministers.

A dedicated Directorate of Transitional Liaison commanded by the Chief of Staff (Operations) at Defence Headquarters facilitated control, formalization of contact and liaison between the SCD and the SADF. This critically established and promoted trust, support and cooperation between the two. Both the SADF and MK also backed the SCD since “it allowed each military formation to monitor the other while maintaining its internal autonomy.”\footnote{627}{P. Frankel, \textit{Soldiers in a Storm: The Armed Forces in South Africa’s Democratic Transition}, (Boulder, Westview Press, 2000),p.33}
Despite clarity over the formation of the new defence force, DDR appears to have been steamrolled and not given appropriate attention during the negotiations. In retrospect, the politicians’ emphasis on the establishment of a new, consolidated national defence force was detrimental to the design and implementation of a comprehensive demobilization and reintegration strategy.

It is also noteworthy that the military negotiations involved the two main protagonists, MK and SADF, until 1993 when Transkei, Venda and Ciskei defence forces came on board. APLA only joined at the end of the negotiations and its members were only included in the integration process on the basis of a special presidential concession. The initial absence of the TBVC and other NSF, such as APLA and AZANLA, later “posed problems that would become evident once the armed forces amalgamated after the elections.”\(^{628}\) This “meant that the status of APLA is technically different to that of the rest of the integrating forces, a matter which is affecting the eligibility of former APLA for payment of severance packages.”\(^{629}\) This might also explain the lack of emphasis on reintegration.

5.4 Disarmament: Prelude to establishment of the SANDF

There was no elaborate disarmament programme. However, against a backdrop of significant meetings between the apartheid government and the un-banned ANC, the

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\(^{629}\) M Malan, “Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict South Africa: The Need for a Comprehensive Demobilisation
ANC suspended its armed struggle in August 1990. This was under the framework of the Pretoria Minute of 6th August 1990, which reaffirmed both parties commitment to “moving as speedily as possible towards a negotiated peaceful political settlement.” By agreeing to “no further armed actions and related activities by the ANC and its military wing Umkhonto we Sizwe will take place” the nationalist movement ostensibly opened the opportunity for self-managed disarmament.

The Pretoria Minute, however, did not end the mistrust, competition and military machinations by the parties. The ensuing volatile political and security framework hamstrung disarmament efforts. For instance, South African Police Services’ (SAPS) Commissioner Africa Khumalo, one former MK commander in charge of disarmament, said:

There was violence taking place in the communities. The IFP attacked our communities and there was the whole issue of defending our communities. We had to organize the Self Defence Units to play that role...The process of disengaging was affected now by this new process of engaging with the aim of protecting our communities. We had to train the Self Defence Units and provide them with firearms. So, some of the firearms that were expected to be handed over were given to the Self Defence Units to defend the communities against IFP, security and police attacks.630

Against this unstable backdrop the South African government and ANC signed the DF Malan Accord of February 1991. The Accord reiterated the parties’ commitment to the

630 Interview with SAPS Deputy Provincial Commissioner Africa Khumalo, Ex-MK Commander, 25 April 2005, Johannesburg
upholding of the most pertinent points of the Pretoria Meeting that touched on weapons control. Commissioner Africa Khumalo, explained:

We had infiltrated a number of our senior commanders into the country like Chris Hani, Maharaji and Gebhuza. The main purpose was that at the time the ANC was looking at the possibility of a major insurrection against the government. So we had Operation Vula running in which a number of firearms were sent into the country in preparation for the insurrection. The government was worried that there was still infiltration of firearms into the country whereas they were engaged in negotiations. I think you understand that it would have been difficult for us to trust the government at that stage. When we were still outside the country we got instructions from the ANC that we must cease infiltrating firearms into the country and we must not retrieve firearms in our arms caches. Before the elections there was the Malan Agreement which was a result of a meeting held in the Western Cape.631

The provisions of the Malan Accord included the control over the cadres and arms the ANC and MK had increasingly infiltrated into the country. One of the results of the Accord was the registration and legalization of specific MK firearms after the ANC “raised concerns about the need to protect our leadership” and “this was one of the processes which helped in the disarmament process.”632 In addition, a facilitative Government Gazette of March 1991 authorized automatic indemnity for MK members who received military training and engaged in armed military activities up to the 8th of October 1990.633

A result of the above initiatives was the disarmament of some 4 000 MK fighters and their return to South Africa from camps in Uganda and Tanzania as “unarmed civilians”

631 Interview with SAPS Deputy Provincial Commissioner Africa Khumalo, Ex-MK Commander, 25 April 2005, Johannesburg
632 Interview with SAPS Deputy Provincial Commissioner Africa Khumalo, Ex-MK Commander, 25 April 2005, Johannesburg
during the UNHCR voluntary repatriation operation. Interviews with MK ex-fighters confirmed this:

You were not repatriated just like that. It was a voluntary thing...There was no need for you to come back with your ammunition... The military high command disarmed us in the camps. We never had anything on our possession that belonged to me,(we did not have any personal effects) everything belonged to the ANC. So whatever we had (weapons etc) had to remain with the ANC. We do not know what happened to the armaments. The ANC itself and the military headquarters know about this.

Repatriation depended from one country to the other, that is countries we were stationed (in), although we finally came back. In some instances people refused to sign the declaration forms because there were certain issues that were not clarified. As much(far)as arms were concerned we were disarmed prior to us coming back to the country. But also some of us retained some combat uniforms and so forth but when you arrived at the airport you were searched and stuff was taken. We did not know the agreement then but we had to comply. The security forces searched us.

Disarmament and repatriation under UNCHR was not elaborately linked to ex-fighter reintegration. The repatriated fighters received limited rehabilitation assistance that was provided for under the repatriation process. The weapons collected “went back to the headquarters of the liberation movements because there were some form of records on the movements’ weapons and which units were given what. They may not have returned all but people returned their weapons.” The liberation movements then handed over these weapons to the TEC and they were supposed to be destroyed.

“Stunned return to the new South Africa”

635 Interview with Jabulani Ephraim Sibiya, MK ex-fighter, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg
636 Interview with Pamela Daniels, MK ex-fighter and Managing Director, MK Military Veterans Association, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg
637 Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Chief of Policy and Planning, Department of Defence, 5 April 2005, Pretoria
638 Interview with SAPS Deputy Provincial Commissioner Africa Khumalo, Ex-MK Commander, 25 April
Further attempts at disarmament included a July 1993 month-long amnesty period during which people could hand over weapons and would be immune from prosecution. However, in a statement that could strongly be construed to imply weapons retention by ANC cadres, ANC spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa, said “The ANC will never hand over weapons to this illegal government.” Notably, with only three days before the amnesty ended only 18 weapons had been handed in. However, South African Police spokesman Captain Louis le Roux attributed the poor response to possession of arms by criminals who feared to be linked with other arms.

Disarmament was not in any way complete. This may have contributed to South Africa’s multi-causal and destructive small arms scourge. For example, firearms are said to “feature prominently in violent crime and contribute directly to the distinctively high murder rate in SA.” SAPS’ Deputy Provincial Commissioner Africa Khumalo, one former MK commander in charge of disarmament, noted: “Finally, not all firearms were collected. Some of them, we have found in the cash-in-transit robberies. Thus (till) today, the government is still giving amnesties with regards to handing in of illegal firearms.”

5.5 Establishment of the SANDF

2005, Johannesburg

639 The Star, 29 July 1993 “Amnesty for arms gets poor response”

640 The Star, 29 July 1993 “Amnesty for arms gets poor response”

642 Interview with SAPS Deputy Provincial Commissioner Africa Khumalo, Ex-MK Commander, 25 April
The establishment of a unitary national force was conceived in a formal and organized manner. It followed intricate and delicate negotiations between the two main stakeholders, namely the ANC’s MK and the apartheid government’s SADF. A Joint Military Coordinating Committee (JMCC), consisting of representatives from all the parties and alternately chaired by MK and SADF representatives, was established by the TEC in 1993. Siphiwe Nyanda (Chief of MK), later General, Chief of the SANDF (CSANDF) and his predecessor General Georg Meiring (Chief of SADF) co-chaired the JMCC. The JMCC reported to the SCD.

Joint political authority was ostensibly meant to guard against granting authority to any one of the military formations, particularly the apartheid SADF. The JMCC was a mechanism that the SADF and MK could use to “exercise a degree of supervision and control over the other in the experimental and inherently unstable conditions of transition.” In reality, however, the JMCC capacity and influence in this regards was undercut by SADF dominance. It “relied heavily on SADF input and on the SADF’s planning approach” when developing key strategic issues like threat analysis and force design.

These arrangements had tremendous implications for the JMCC whose main functions can be summarized as follows:

2005, Johannesburg

643 The Integration Committee replaced the JMCC in the post-election period.
• To liaise with all military forces to promote the objects of the TEC

• To formulate a code of conduct for the period up to the election and for the National Defence Force

• To coordinate and finalize the strategic planning process for the National Defence Force.

The demobilization and reintegration of ex-NSF who could not join the new defence force was not a central feature of the SCD assignment. In retrospect the neglect of planning, demobilization and reintegration strategies had negative effects on the sustainability of ex-fighters in non-combat livelihoods.

The JMCC thus designed the initial strategy for the complicated and sensitive integration process of seven armed forces into a professional, efficient and representative South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Statutory forces referred to government forces, namely the SADF and the armed forces of the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC) homelands. Non-statutory forces comprised the ANC’s Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and the Azania Peoples Liberation Army (APLA). Mangosuthu Buthelezi’s Inkatha Freedom Party’s KwaZulu Self Protection Forces (KZSPF) were later included.

Personnel included in CPRs submitted by the participating armies were automatically conscripted into the new South African National Defence Force (SANDF) implying formal or legal demobilization upon exit. The numbers of personnel who presented themselves for integration is shown below.
Table 5.1 SANDF Integration Numbers

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<tr>
<td>SANDF</td>
<td>110 000</td>
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<td>TBVC States</td>
<td>6 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>MK (ANC)</td>
<td>26 000</td>
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<td>APLA (PAC)</td>
<td>6 000</td>
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<td>KZSPF</td>
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Integration was selective and hinged on specific criteria including educational qualifications and performance in competence tests. Ex-combatants who did not possess military or education qualifications sat for aptitude tests. These fighters were graded from 1-10 according to performance in the tests. Fighters in categories 1-3 did not qualify for integration, categories 4-6 integrated as non-commissioned-officers and 7-10 as commissioned officers. It did provide a sustainable career option for non-statutory forces who aspired to enlist and were recruited. The fighters who did not qualify were demobilized and reintegrated under a process that will be discussed later.

The militarily intact, complex and organizationally capable former SADF provided the institutional framework and infrastructure for the integration process. Dissimilar training doctrines and gender and racial prejudices were among challenges that were confronted by integrated forces. The government invited BMATT to assist “the integration of people of widely disparate competencies, qualifications and years of service” into a balanced, modern and technologically advanced military force with internationally accepted professional norms and standards as provided by the constitution.546 During the military negotiations the SADF always preferred British assistance “given the roots of the
nation’s armed forces in the commonwealth tradition.” BMATT, with its proven track-record in Zimbabwe and Namibia and its perceived neutrality by the suspicious parties, had the requisite expertise:

The 31 members of BMATT are experts in their fields, having corps specific training as well as staff training…The air force, navy and medical representatives on the BMATT have appropriate broad operational and staff training experience specific to that arm of service.

BMATT doubled up as monitors and adjudicators when placement or appointments were made in the four arms (army, air force, navy and medical services) of the SANDF. BMATT certified the agreed upon selection criteria for emplacement into the SANDF and observed and supervised the actual screening process as it was carried out by the South Africa’s selection teams. The selection criteria included educational qualifications, previous experience, results of the pre-selection tests, age, NSF seniority and military qualifications.

BMATT’s task was to be facilitated by a highly structured institutional framework. BMATT operated under the administration and command of the British Embassy. It liaised with the SANDF via the Chief of Staff Personnel. The appointment by each arm of the SANDF of a senior liaison officer to BMATT enhanced coordination. In addition, the commander of BMATT and his staff had open communication lines with all the relevant staff divisions of the SANDF.

646 “The British are coming” SALUT, June 1994, Vol. 1, No. 2, p.38

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Although BMATT’s task was to assist the formation of the new SANDF, this was hampered by the fact this was effectively implemented under the old SADF organizational structures. As a result BMATT’s influence, like that of the JMCC, was effectively insignificant. Even though there was no clear military victor “the SADF. (remained) discriminatory, devious, prescriptive, and arrogant in its refusal to treat MK from the outset as an equivalent army” and the SADF subsequently set “the basic terms for the process of integration following elections.”649 Garth Shelton also explained that:

BMATT did not have authority over the SADF. The SADF was too powerful. They were very well organized as an institution and it was important not to upset them. The situation was unpredictable...Everybody was very careful not to upset the senior officers of the old SADF. Their support was needed to support the new democracy, the (transition) process. Who knows what will happen in a country where the defence force does not support the constitution? It was a very tense, difficult time. People were very careful.650

South Africa’s integration process was lengthy, experimental and problematic. Amongst these well documented problems were justifiable grievances by the ex-NSF including that the establishment of the SANDF was not integration in a proper sense but their absorption into the old SADF; the prolonged nature of the process; “disappearance” of files to sabotage the process; poor accommodation facilities in comparison to their white military colleagues and low ranks and salaries.651 At one time ex-MK personnel awaiting

650 Interview with Prof. Garth Shelton, International Relations Department, University of the Witwatersrand, 3 December 2004, Johannesburg
recruitment into the SANDF went AWOL requiring President Mandela’s intervention to avert derailment of the process. The difficulties encountered caused integration, initially earmarked to be complete by 1994, to be extended by about three years. Approximately 25 000 MK and APLA went into assembly points out of an estimated combined total of 42 266 MK and APLA members; and by July 1998 only 19 000 had been integrated into SANDF.

Notwithstanding these and other problems the establishment of the new SANDF has been widely acclaimed as a success:

Despite initial disturbances over pay, living conditions, and grades, 20,000 former members of Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK), the ANC's military wing; 6,000 former members of the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), the armed wing of the PAC; and 9,000 members of the former homeland armies have been successfully integrated with the 65,000 member government defense forces.652

However, eventual successful establishment of the new SANDF contrasted with the generally ineffective demobilization and reintegration process of those who were not absorbed into the new force.

5.6 Demobilization and reintegration: The process and the impacts

South Africa’s demobilization process was linked to the establishment of the new SANDF. While the formation of the SANDF was structured and well thought out “the

Demobilization of former APLA and MK soldiers was an afterthought. Demobilization was implemented, on the basis of a cabinet decision of 16 August 1995, as an exit strategy for NSF personnel who were on the CPR but ineligible or disinclined to join the SANDF. In 1995 the then Minister of Defence, now late, Joe Modise, announced the demobilization process as involving the voluntary release of members of the former NSF, who despite being constitutionally part of the SANDF, did not wish to serve in the full-time force or who could not do so due to age, ill health or did not meet the minimum requirements for service in the SANDF. Lephopho besoin Mashike argues that the result of the expedient nature of the demobilization process was that “there was no proper planning for the reintegration of former soldiers into civilian life.”

Demobilization, started in 1995 after the democratic elections, was secondary to the formation of the SANDF. However, legislated demobilization and reintegration only occurred between 1996 and 1998 after the institution of the White Paper on Defence and Demobilization Act both of 1996. Tsepe Motumi, South Africa Department of Defence Chief of Policy and Planning, observed:

The way DDR was approached was not as comprehensive and well planned as it should have been. Events unfolded so fast that by the time the political leadership realized that we …(had) to have the issue of reintegration sorted out lest we have problems later; we already had elements of some kind of DDR in a sense. For one, the armed struggle had already been formally suspended in 1990…you had already from about that time on begun to have trickles of people coming back into the country, not so much your guerrillas or former combatants(as your

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civilians) and you also had those (former combatant) elements coming back from 1991 onwards. So it is against that background that I am saying the planning was not necessarily fully and thoroughly thought out. But be that as it may there were some attempts to try and see how that can be addressed but in a somewhat haphazard way; because you only had it (DDR) formally being recognized only from about 1994. So you can imagine then what happened in the interim period…The legislative framework for demobilization only got put into place in 1996. It then had to have a retrospective effect.  

Demobilization of ex-NSF caused disaffection among many combatants who wanted to join the new SANDF and felt they had been excluded:

In some instances you [would] find that all the group's [test] results had come out [but] ... yours would not come. But the people you wrote with would get their results first. The way it was supposed to happen, the results were supposed to come at the same time. [This] is when I started to have doubts, that okay, why is it happening like this? [MK/SDU]

We were told that we (had) failed. You write but you don't see your results, you are told verbally that you failed the potential test, then [that] you are going to be demobilised - in that manner. [MK/SDU]

You were supposed to see your results and say 'Okay, I made the mistake here and there'... [But] you were told 'You failed, you failed'... You don't see your script and see where you failed. This surprised me ... because of the things that were taking place. You were told that a person who has passed matric has failed the potential test. You take a person who has never been to school and you are told that he has passed [the] potential test ... Whilst I passed standard 8 someone with standard 2 passed [the test] and I am told that I failed, [even] whilst having a certain level of education. [MK/SDU]

Despite BMATT’s certification of the selection criteria, the old SADF dominance might have compromised the selection process. Also, according to one analyst, early pre-screening and integration “was almost entirely haphazard, largely experimental, and a

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656 Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Chief of Policy and Planning, Department of Defence, 5 April 2005, Pretoria
learning process for all participants. This was against a backdrop of mutual antagonism. The grassroots of both forces were oblivious of the integration fundamentals and did not fully understand the process due to lack of downward spiral of detail in the military formations, did not fully understand the process. Some ex-fighters, already bitter at ‘exclusion’ from the new SANDF, were further disappointed by practically deficient reintegration efforts.

The demobilized were supposed to be catered for by a three-legged demobilization and reintegration strategy:

- Gratuity payment
- Counselling and advisory service to guide the ex-fighters on how to manage their gratuities as well as to advise on the options available to support their reintegration
- Skills upgrade via the Service Corps training scheme

5.6.1 Gratuity payments

Just like in the case of Zimbabwe and Namibia the disillusioned former combatants, also known as non-statutory forces, were not eligible for the similar pensions and benefits due to their erstwhile adversaries in the apartheid security forces. Commenting on the Durban

659 P. Frankel, *Soldiers in a Storm: The Armed Forces in South Africa’s Democratic Transition*, p.62
protest by unemployed MK ex-fighters ANC southern Natal regional media officer
Dumisani Makhaye said:

It is the irony of South African politics that while members of the SA Defence Force and SA Police, whose calling in history has been to defend the crime of apartheid, continue to be paid from state coffers, those who sacrificed everything so that there may be a negotiated settlement …are left to fend for themselves.661

These discrepancies were not sufficiently addressed by the gratuity payments provided ex-non statutory forces. The gratuities were calculated according to length of service in the liberation armies. The cabinet approved the scales of the gratuities with sums in excess of R30 000 subject to normal taxation.662

3 770 former MK and APLA fighters had been demobilized by the end of February 1997. Part of the financial compensation awarded ex-fighters is shown in the table below.

Table 6.2: Demobilization payments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Amount paid</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>22-23</td>
<td>R42 058</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>R34 313</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>R28 721</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>R20 201</td>
<td>1 049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>R12 734</td>
<td>2 003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td></td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


661 Natal Mercury, 20 August 1993 “Ten-day sit-in by ANC exiles ends”
As at December 1997 the total paid for the demobilization of 4 143 was R82 752 639.\(^{663}\)
By June 2001 this had increased to a total of 9 771 demobilization gratuity payments at a total amount of R246 200 000.\(^{664}\)

The gratuity payments could have been useful as transitional assistance to tide the ex-fighters between demobilization and long-term reintegration assistance. However, the gratuities failed to serve a safety-net reinsertion purpose as they were not substantial and did not consider the socio-economic profiles and needs of the intended ex-fighter beneficiaries. Interviews with ex-fighters reveal that the demobilization payments were based more on expediency and did not facilitate their long-term effective reintegration:

Demobilization came when people were hungry. They would settle for anything. In the bush we had no relationship with money. We did not know money. If we were told that we would be given any amount whether R20 000 or R30 000 we would jump. We did not know the long term implications.\(^{665}\)

One can be dignified if one has shelter. We were not expecting a lot but respect for what we did for the country. Demobilization money, like R20 000, was basic money; a little amount. No one can make life with R20 000. You have a family to care for, you want to start and run a business.\(^{666}\)

On the amount that I got on that part of demobilization I won’t say it really was sufficient to uplift my standard of living. Because when I came back here I did not have a house, I did not have school nor whatever. So the only thing that I thought would create a bench for me to start life was zero.\(^{667}\)

\(^{663}\) J. Higgs, *The Critical Component: Personnel Strategies for the SANDF to 2000 and Beyond*, (Johannesburg, SAIIA, 1999), p.15


\(^{665}\) Mr Oupa Monareng, Parliamentary Committee on Defence, Military Veterans Symposium, 25 August 2004, Johannesburg

\(^{666}\) Interview with Ex-APLA Combatant Gordon Mpini, 26 August 2004, Johannesburg

\(^{667}\) Interview with Jabulani Ephraim Sibiya, MK ex-fighter, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg
The combatants were not used to money. Even those members of the SANDF who got Severance Packages of say R200 000 faced problems. Within a year the money was gone. Suffering resulted. People should have been given financial management skills… Some used the Severance Packages to buy cars. Cars are not a necessity and are prone to accident damage. The majority of the demobilized are homeless. Government could have paid for houses on behalf of the demobilized or as part of the Severance Packages.\textsuperscript{668}

The once-off gratuity for the common ex-fighter without financial management skills did not facilitate the upliftment and sustainable reintegration of most ex-fighters. While a noble gesture, the flash funding gratuity needed to be relatively substantial and partnered by a solid skills development and entrepreneur friendly scheme in order to sustainably reintegrate the ex-fighters. The Service Corps, as shall be elaborated on later, did not facilitate this.

5.6.2 The Service Corps Concept

In theory, the Service Corps, as a project for social and economic reintegration, had the dual aim of empowering the demobilized with vocational skills that they could usefully employ in sustainable civilian economic life whilst providing service to the broader community in the post-conflict era. The Service Corps was “was informed by Namibia’s Development Brigades to re-skill and assist in the transition of combatants to civilian life.”\textsuperscript{669} At the official launch of the Service Corps at the Dunnottar Military Base on 31 January 1995, Joe Modise, then Minister of Defence, said: “The Service Corps provides

\textsuperscript{668} Interview with Ex-TBVC/SANDF Combatant M.E. Matiti, 26 August 2004, Johannesburg
\textsuperscript{669} Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Chief of Policy and Planning, Department of Defence, 5 April 2005, Pretoria
an opportunity for the men and women leaving military life to gain vocational and life skills. These skills will enable them to be employed in the RDP-related development and maintenance projects. General Andrew M. M. Masondo (Retd), former Chief of the Service Corps, explained the intended ex-fighter reintegration function of the Corps:

When you are a guerrilla or a liberation movement activist we don’t ask you how many degrees you have or level of education. You get in and we train you. But a conventional military organization has got specific requirements. So it was clear that some of our people (MK cadres) would not make it for the SANDF because of lack of education… The question was what we were going to do… The Service Corps as we conceived it was a place where people where going to be trained for making sure that they can make a living and also to do it in such a way that they are able to get jobs or they can actually start business and things of that nature.

Through contributions by industrious ex-fighters to nation building and reconstruction of an erstwhile divided South Africa, the Service Corps sought to provide an opportunity for confidence-building and interaction between the demobilized and wider society.

The Service Corps concept was negotiated during the TEC era. The new defence ministry finalized the concept that was aimed to roll-out alongside the broader RDP framework. In October 1994 a planning committee was structured at the Chief of the SANDF level. Lieutenant General Lambert. Moloi (Ex-MK) and Brigadier J.M.A. Swanepoel (Ex-SADF) were appointed Chief and Deputy Chief of the Service Corps respectively. A directorate, comprising full staff services, was also established under the command of the Chief of the SANDF. It was planned that Service Corps, under the

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671 Interview with General Andrew M.L. Masando (Retd), Former Chief of the Service Corps, 26 April 2005, Pretoria
672 Recognizing the reintegration problems faced by its cadres the MK held a special conference on 3-4
command of Army Commands, would be established in each of the nine provinces according to local and regional needs. The Corps were supposed to determine and ensure the availability of appropriate facilities and instructors.

A two-option counselling service was planned to precede possible enrolment into the Service Corps. The first, a voluntary two-week orientation period, was intended to cover:

- the role, functions and benefits of joining the Service Corps as well as the role of the Army Directorate in the Service Corps
- counselling on personal matters, mainly, those relating to adapting to civil society. This would include the learning of civilian skills, stress and conflict management, career counselling (occupational options, compiling curriculum vitaes, job applications, work ethics, information on the Department of labour and Civil Bureaus, social services)
- legal advice, labour relations, encompassing aspects such as workman’s compensation and trade unionism, health care
- counselling on financial matters such as banking, different bank account types, credit and insurance, business management

The second option comprised a two-weeks training -mainly, management and entrepreneur related- tailor-made according to individual needs. The Service Corps was thus aimed at preparing ex-fighters for productive post-combat civilian roles.

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September that discussed their welfare. The reintegration strategy suggested by the conference to draw on a R10million pledge by ANC had components that mirrored the Service Corps.

673 “Demob kicks off”, SALUT, Nov 1995, Vol 2, No. 11, p.68

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The Service Corps learners would receive eighteen-month training courses in:

- Basic industrial trades such as building, carpentry, garment making, sheet making, welding and plumbing
- Service industrial trades including household appliances repair and maintenance, audio-visual electronics, automobile repair and maintenance, motor cycle repair and maintenance\(^{674}\)

There would be special provision for women to receive training in baking and dressmaking. It was important to have gender sensitive and women-friendly training.

Having completed the intended competency-based modular practical training, which emphasized mastering of skills, students would be issued certificates that were intended to be acknowledged by both the public and private sector. The Corps would provide interim employment to grandaunts until they secured employment outside the SANDF. To ensure the creation of essential institutional framework it was planned that the government would establish partnerships with educational institutions and employer bodies for the ex-fighters educational and employment placement.

The South African White Paper on Defence, which provided post-apartheid South Africa’s defence policy framework, retrospectively elucidated the country’s demobilization and reintegration strategy. It stated that demobilization was planned to facilitate “the voluntary release of members of the former non statutory forces who are

\(^{674}\) “Demob kicks off”, SALUT, Nov 1995, Vol 2, No. 11, p.68
constitutionally part of the SANDF but who either do not wish to serve in the Defence Force or unable to do so for reasons of age, ill-health or aptitude.\(^675\)

The White Paper on Defence further elaborated the imperatives of assisting ex-fighters to reintegrate:

Since these people contributed to the struggle against apartheid, it would be unjust to end their military careers without compensation, especially in the case of aged and disabled military veterans. They will consequently be assisted financially, as well as through the Special Pensions Act envisaged by the Constitution. It is a matter of great importance that this Act is now promulgated.\(^676\)

This meant that South Africa singled out ex-NSF as a special category requiring reintegration assistance. More pertinently, the White Paper on Defence was modeled along the broader security concept that integrated human security.

Security is an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being...The Government of National Unity recognises that the greatest threats to the South African people are socio-economic problems like poverty, unemployment, poor education, the lack of housing and the absence of adequate social services, as well as the high level of crime and violence. Accordingly, one of the government's policy priorities is the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The RDP is the principal long-term means of promoting the well-being and security of citizens and, thereby, the stability of the country.\(^677\)

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Progressively, the demobilization and reintegration project was planned to dovetail the reorganization of the broader economic framework as it was to be part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) rather than a normal defence function.678

The White Paper on Defence stated that the demobilization and reintegration scheme would comprise:

- one-off financial gratuity payment (whose size was commensurate with length of service);
- personal, social and economic counselling; and
- the emplacement of the Service Corps socio-economic project.679

The demobilization and reintegration process was only institutionalized with the enactment of the Demobilization Act on 1 December 1996. The Act authorized aforementioned demobilization benefits, including those payments which had been implemented prior to the law. The process was planned to be completed within one year of the enactment of the Demobilization Act. The stated underlining rationale was that:

Demobilization and rationalisation will be handled with great sensitivity. This is both a moral obligation and a political necessity. If former soldiers are not assisted in adapting to civilian life, they may become a burden on society and may engage in crime and banditry.680

678 RDP was adopted by the South Africa government to address poverty and the socio-economic inequalities of apartheid.
It is critical, at this point, to distinguish demobilization, which is the focus of this thesis, from rationalization. The formation of the SANDF by the inclusion of all NSF on CPRs resulted in an inflated national defence force that was “neither cost effective nor appropriate to the security situation.”\textsuperscript{681} This underpinned the need for rationalization. Rationalization meant the reduction of the Regular Force to approved force levels through, \textit{inter alia}, the retrenchment of military personnel following integration basing on budgetary considerations and the future size and shape of each Arm of Service of the SANDF. Massive military expenditure was no longer justifiable against a backdrop of the receding regional mutual threat perception. The new SANDF that numbered over 100 000 after integration had to be trimmed to a planned 65 000 to 70 000 mark.

5.6.3 \textit{The Service Corps: Institutional framework and management}

The good intentions of the Service Corps have been elaborated on earlier. Notwithstanding this, an enabling and appropriate institutional framework was not put in place to implement the programme. In practice, institutional weaknesses worked against the potential of the Service Corps to facilitate productive ex-fighter reintegration.

One weakness of the Service Corps programme was that it was planned without the comprehensive input of its intended beneficiaries. Pamela Daniels, Managing Director of MK Military Veterans Association, said:

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Because you cannot elaborate designing and planning without involving the people who would be the beneficiaries or who would be involved in the whole process…. Basically there was no consultation. Ex-combatants were not part of (the) planning (of) what was supposed to be (of) their benefit which then tells you that we did not benefit.682

There was no socio-economic profiling and this meant that the ex-fighters were not classified according to their individual competencies, needs and aspirations. Furthermore, the training offered was not tailor-made to suit the demands of the job market. The Service Corps did not create networks with industry and commerce to set up practical attachments for trainees who could have secured employment via these internships.683

Lephophotho Mashike and Mafole Mokalobe have commented:

Firstly, the SC had been established without effective planning and training programmes had been designed without adequate analysis of existing skills among demobilised soldiers, their careers, their career aspirations and socio-economic needs. Secondly, no labour market analysis has been undertaken, which has resulted in some trainees acquiring skills with which they are not able to secure jobs within or close to their places of residence.684

Ex-fighters revealed that the training offered was also not responsive to their needs:

When we arrived at Springs, they (white officers) told us to choose courses. We said we wanted motor mechanic [training]. They said 'No'. They called us 'monkeys' [and] said that monkeys are not suitable for motor mechanic [courses], but are suitable for bricklay[ing] and carpentry courses. [MK/SDU]685

682 Interview with Pamela Daniels, MK ex-fighter and Managing Director, MK Military Veterans Association, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg
683 Interview with Brigadier General M.D. Myamya, SANDF Director Personnel Separation, 10 December 2004, Johannesburg
684 L. Mashike and M. Mokalobe, Reintegration into Civilian Life: The case of former MK and APLA combatants, TRACK TWO, Vol 12 No 1, p.24
685 MK/SDU ex-fighter in S. Gear, Wishing us Away: Challenges Facing Ex-combatants in the New South Africa
According to the record of the Service Corps in 1996 I was third on their list of people who were to be re-skilled. But the type of qualifications that I wanted I was told straight into my face that who do I think that I am because I would get such a qualification through the Service Corp because the amount of the course and everything they wouldn’t dare. I wanted to do management, computers and everything that I thought would take me up.  

This then resulted in greater dissatisfaction among ex-fighters who could not secure jobs after undergoing training.

The location of the Service Corps in the Department of Defence and its management by military officers was problematic. While stressing the military’s major function, General Masondo (Retd), portrayed it as a self-contained training institution that was capable of running the Service Corps.

Within the defence forces there are those courses which we run for the sake of fighting because that is our major activity…Part of us is to train people to kill. So we prepare people for that. But you see, within the defence forces people eat, so we train people to cook; people drive motor cars, we train them to repair those motor cars; people get sick, we train people to be doctors, to be nurses. So it means we actually train them for a holistic life…Sometimes the military is more efficient in certain things than civilian organizations. The other aspect is here are people leaving a military life. They get to civilians. Civilians have a difficulty in handling them. So it’s better you have the military people to push them through.

This defensive assertion belies the fact that the militaristic institutional arrangements impeded on the promise of the Service Corps to positively contribute to the effective reintegration of ex-fighters into civilian life. Analysts of South Africa’s DDR have noted

“The SC has been hampered in supporting the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil

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686 Interview with Pamela Daniels, MK ex-fighter and Managing Director, MK Military Veterans Association, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg

687 Interview with General Andrew M.L. Masondo (Retd), Former Chief of the Service Corps, 26 April
society by its location in the military and its narrow focus”688 and

the maintenance of a military culture within the SC has tended to undermine a
culture of learning in civilian terms. All members of the SC wear military-type
uniforms inherited from the former Venda Defence Force. Officers still retain
their military titles, and junior officers have to salute senior officers at the SC.689

Considering the overlap between defence and civilian functions during a reintegration
process the Service Corps, one may suppose, could have worked better if an appropriate
cooperative institutional framework had been worked out. Lephophotho Mashike
observed:

The nature of the institution being a military structure and secondly poor
planning… Some of us have argued that maybe the Service Corps should have
served as place where very few people serve as an administrative institution and
give the whole programme to a civilian body. Experience shows that non-
governmental organizations are more effective when dealing with ex-
combatants.690

With a shrinking budget, the military was averse to sponsoring perceived “non-core”
business: “The subsequent work of the Service Corps in reintegrating personnel into civil
society has been equally unimpressive, partially because the NDF has little enthusiasm
for an institution that draws on its own account to fund a social reconstruction
programme with little military participation.”691

2005, Pretoria
McKenzie, From defence to development, David Philip, Cape Town, 1998, p.201
689 L. Mashike and M. Mokalobe, Reintegration into Civilian Life: The case of former MK and APLA
combatants, TRACK TWO, Vol 12 No 1, p.24
690 Interview with Lephophotho Mashike, Sociology Department, University of the Witwatersrand, 27
September 2004, Johannesburg
691 P. Frankel, Soldiers in a Storm: The Armed Forces in South Africa’s Democratic Transition, (Boulder,
South Africa’s demobilization and reintegration was not only managed by national authorities. It was mainly government funded. However, in certain aspects the post-apartheid role that the government was playing as “the only agency of development” was problematic. Lack of international assistance and NGO financial support negatively affected South Africa’s national DDR programme. To train 5 500 people per annum the Service Corps would have required a substantial R150 million at a time when the defence budget had been cut. Besides an initial R141 million grant by the Taiwanese government to set the first vocational training centre there was limited subsequent non-governmental funding. Further promised technical and financial assistance from Taiwan was precluded when the South Africa government broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan in favour of mainland China.

Technical and administrative business start-up support was also lacking and some of the demobilized could not productively and sustainably use their newly acquired skills: “The Service Corps was helpful because of the education. However, if people train to be self-employed they become victims because the Service Corps does not provide money to buy tools.” A potentially useful revolving loan facility aimed at assisting Service Corps graduates to engage in business ventures was not put in place. The graduates were taught the proverbial fishing skills but were not given the rods to catch fish on their own. While providing tools and employment was not part of the Service Corps mandate, the civilian

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management of the training and cooperation with other stakeholders could have eased the post-training sustainability of ex-fighters. While government’s lead role was imperative, the coordinated involvement and cooperation of donor agencies and NGOs was financially important.

The Service Corps was also negatively affected by the political context in which it was supposed to roll out. Respondents observed that “For the Service Corps to have Afrikaans speaking people to offer training to their former enemies was one of the things that people have argued…(to have been problematic)” \(^{695}\) and “When we think about (the fact) that people in the old military, the enemy military can provide reintegration support for people (erstwhile adversaries) to move into civilian society is just actually ludicrous.” \(^{696}\) The Service Corps was run under the old SADF structures at a delicate and volatile time considering the conflict-era animosities between the apartheid forces and the liberation war fighters.

There were no in-built monitoring mechanisms that were put in place at the start of the Service Corps. Eventual official appraisal of the Corps performance confirmed its shortcomings and failure to ensure effective ex-fighter reintegration. Given the general consensus over the shortcomings of the Service Corps the Department of Defence said that lessons were identified and efforts were being made to revitalize the concept.

\(^{694}\) Interview with Ex-APLA Combatant Gordon Mpini, 26 August 2004, Johannesburg

\(^{695}\) Interview with Lephophothe Mashike, Sociology Department, University of the Witwatersrand, 27 September 2004, Johannesburg

\(^{696}\) Interview with Sasha Gear, Researcher, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation,
There were questions whether it is correct that the Service Corps should reside in the Department of Defence. There is agreement now that there is need to migrate the entity out of Defence to other entities of state, either Department of Labour, Department of Education or Department of Social Development - this is informed by existing studies. And then you retain a smaller component in Defence which is mainly administrative and transitory in type. That is happening already. In the last year there has been a destigmatization exercise to make it more acceptable. That has helped. In fact late last year we had a batch of about 200 current SANDF who completed the Corps training.697

Notwithstanding this, it appears the Service Corps still has vestigial apartheid elements and this is compounded by its history of failure and lack of understanding of the new re-skilling paradigms. An expert, who has worked with the Department of Defence on reintegration issues, has mentioned symptoms of the lack of broader and comprehensive transformation:

DIDTETA (Diplomacy, Intelligence, Defence and Trade Education) appointed a retired air force colonel - a white Afrikaner male- as their Skills Manager. This is a critical dimension which is neglected. Military Veterans Organizations need to be located in civil society and there is little understanding of the need to manage a complex and dual identity - citizenship and the military one. Unless this separation happens through conscious alliances and partnerships - instead of the collusion and attempts to retain control within DoD, this project will not succeed. Such public/private partnerships should be government funded but contractor operated with clear routes of accountability and reporting. A model which apparently implies power sharing and giving up control in DoD quarters.698

This potentially sustainable approach has not been taken in South Africa.

5.6.4 The Economic Context

22 September 2004, Johannesburg
697 Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Chief of Policy and Planning, Department of Defence, 5 April 2005, Pretoria
698 Interview with Rachel Prinsloo, UNISA - Academic Planning Officer, 15 April 2005, Johannesburg.

DIDTETA is is one of the 25 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) that were formally established by the Minister of Labour in terms of Section 9(1) of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998, on 20 March 2000.
The fact that South Africa’s antagonists did not engage in “full-scale war against one another was seen as something that prevented the total collapse of the economy, which would have been devastating for post-conflict reconstruction and rebuilding and development efforts.”\(^{699}\) However, despite a relatively functional economy apartheid bequeathed structural inequities which were characterized by disproportionate government spending skewed in favour of whites High illiteracy rates, high unemployment rates, shanty settlements and other social ills characterized the life of the black majority.

The government abandoned RDP and replaced it with the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macroeconomic strategy in 1996. GEAR met its fundamental objectives of controlling the massive deficit inherited in 1994 and taming rampant inflation. However, the blueprint fared less well concerning growth, employment and redistribution. The *Sunday Independent* commented that GEAR’s report card on these indicators would read: “Full of good intentions and showing some improvement, but could do much, much better.”\(^{700}\) The slow progress in national efforts at reforming the wider post-apartheid socio-economic framework meant that socio-economic inequalities characterized by poverty and unemployment continue to be a stumbling block to effective DDR and its potential for positively contributing to peace building.


\(^{700}\) The *Sunday Independent Business Report*, 8 May 2005 “Economy in need of Gear change”
South Africa has unemployment rates as high as 40 percent in some parts of the country.701 Over 60 percent of the black population is either totally without a formal job or employed in the informal sector. In his 2005 State of the Nation Address President Thabo Mbeki noted the continual high unemployment difficulties: “As a consequence of the stronger growth, the employment picture in South Africa has gradually begun to improve. While South Africa certainly still has a major unemployment problem, there are encouraging signs.”702 Chris Landsberg pointed out that

The assumptions about the post-apartheid conditions that if we get the politics right there will be the economic takeoff with hindsight we know that the post-apartheid economic condition is extremely tough. It has been easier for disgruntled whites from the former regime to find accommodation in the economy than it has been for disgruntled people from the military wings of our liberation movements. I really think that it has been far tougher for liberation ex-combatants to find jobs because the economy remains so white dominated.703

The post-apartheid economic context was not facilitative of the effective reintegration of most ex-combatants, who also lacked marketable job skills, into the formal economy. It would, therefore, have been constructive to support the entrance of the demobilized into the informal economy. Diane Abrahams noted this:

It is well known that the South African economy is currently experiencing jobless growth so the mere reskilling of demobilized personnel with the hope that they will be absorbed into the formal economy is not realistic. The informal economy would probably be a more viable option. Assistance should be provided to demobilized staff who may wish to start small, medium or micro-enterprises (SMMEs). Linking up reintegration programmes with agencies such as Ntsika

702 Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, at the Second Joint sitting of the third Democratic Parliament, Cape Town, 11 February 2005
703 Interview with Dr Chris Landsberg, Director, Centre for Policy Studies, 29 November 2004, Johannesburg
and Khula Enterprises, which provide funding and assistance to SMEEs in the country, would be an important route to investigate.\textsuperscript{704}

However, as stated earlier the Service Corps training was not interconnected with post training placements and entrepreneurial support for the demobilized combatants.

The results of the programmatic and institutional inadequacies outlined above juxtaposed an unhelpful economic context was the unsuccessful reintegration of most of the ex-combatants:

You'll notice that our cadres are suffering more than everybody in the country. They should have been the first preference of this government - but the government of the ANC, it has thrown them away. [MK/SDU]

Several scholarly studies have confirmed the ineffective reintegration of ex-fighters. For instance Ian Liebenberg and Marlene Roefs\textsuperscript{705} state that 37\% of their sample was unemployed. The Centre for Conflict Resolution’s study\textsuperscript{706} on the livelihood of ex-combatants found that 66\% of ex-fighters interviewed were unemployed with a third suffering psychological problems.

This was particularly depressing for ex-fighters who hoped that independence would translate into guaranteed human security:

\textsuperscript{704} D. Abrahams, \textit{Defence conversion in South Africa: A faded ideal?}, ISS Paper 51, July 2001, p.5. See also L. Mashike and M. Mokalobe, \textit{Reintegration into Civilian Life: The case of former MK and APLA combatants}, TRACK TWO, Vol 12 No 1, p.31


\textsuperscript{706} L. Mashike and M. Mokalobe, \textit{Reintegration into Civilian Life: The case of former MK and APLA combatants}, TRACK TWO, Vol 12 No 1
That is why I say that I am still in a struggle ... There is this thing emphasised in the Freedom Charter that there shall be houses, security and comfort here inside South Africa ... and they expect it from us - the comrades - that we should make comfort for ourselves ... But you find the resources for those securities are not available. That's why I say that I am still oppressed, even now, because I'm not employed. [MK/SDU]707

The fact that the demobilization and reintegration process lacked clear monitoring and follow-up mechanisms meant no corrective measures were designed to assist ex-fighters who had failed to reintegrate. This created a potentially disruptive sense of neglect, betrayal and marginalization among the ex-combatants708.

You'll notice that today our cadres are lying in the streets, loitering in the streets, no jobs, no nothing ... They find themselves being regarded as rotten rubbish which may be thrown into the dirty bin. We were surviving under a terrible situation during the apartheid regime, but now this is a new regime [and] our people are(still) regarded as useless ... I can say: big fishes, they entertain themselves, small fishes are going to be food for big fishes. [MK/SDU]

This thing that [the] ANC has done to us has destroyed us. For such a long time [we were] working for the ANC [but] the ANC has thrown outside like morning mucus. [MK/SDU]

There is nothing that we are getting. We are still suffering. We are still the same. [MK/SDU]

You see history is going to judge us one day, this whole thing, and when it does that, we will know that somehow we failed the very people who brought liberation to this country. [MK/SDU]

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This raised questions whether ex-fighters are a special class. Sasha Gear noted that among the ex-fighter population itself some believe they deserve and need preferential treatment while others feel they participated in pursuit of democracy.  

You'll notice that our cadres are suffering more than everybody in the country. They should have been the first preference of this government - but the government of the ANC, it has thrown them away. [MK/SDU]

Because they fought for democracy, ex-combatants must get first preference, not the civilians. The government is starting with the civilians and we are just sitting ... We should be the first to know when they are doing something, and that we must be there before other people ... but we are not saying that they must only look out for us because we were fighting for the country. [MK/SDU]

The disparities that exist now are not only between ourselves and our white counterparts but our comrades as well, that have become, overnight, bourgeoisie and they are driving flashy cars and sleeping in very expensive hotels; they fly over our heads. But I think after all is said and done, you look at the thing in a perspective that is consistent with what you did and you will tell yourself, 'Now when I joined the movement I didn't join to benefit myself ... It was the common concern for all South African citizens - that we need[ed] to liberate ourselves from the draconian racial barriers that existed at that time. And for now what you need to do is only to make the most of the worst situation ... the best way you know how.' But there are people who are in a more disadvantaged position than I am. I must recognise that. [MK/SDU]

R1: [I] was suffering but even today I still use my tolerance, my political understanding, according to my commitment that I joined [MK] voluntarily. The motive behind was to serve the interests of the large oppressed and defenceless citizens of our country. And you expect funds from the ANC, that after the liberation [we] would be paid? ... According to my knowledge, I do not expect of us that we're expecting some financial payment from the ANC.

The threats to security and stability posed by ineffectively reintegrated ex-fighters solidified in the form of resort to armed criminal activities and protests. The Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Mluleki George, revealed:

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709 S. Gear, Wishing us Away: Challenges Facing Ex-combatants in the New South Africa, Violence and
Faced with the situation many of these former combatants ended up engaging in violent crime in order to better their situation. A number of them were convicted for cash in transit heists and are serving long prison sentences. While we may all be in agreement that there is no excuse for criminality, we all must, to some extent, stand indicted for probably not having done enough to ensure the socio-economic stability of our military veterans and their dependents.  

Yet another demonstration of their potential threat to stability was the small scale protests they staged. As early as August 1993 27 former unemployed and disenchanted MK members staged a 10 day sit-in at the ANC’s Durban offices paralyzing its operations to demand welfare support. The fighters had been left exposed following the termination of the short-term UNHCR and SACC relief assistance. “Hungry, penniless and tired of living in poverty while their leaders jet around the world and live in comfortable homes, the cadres staged the sit-in after more than two years of a bungled repatriation process in which the United Nations recently packed up its relief agency after funds dried up.” The ex-fighters who were demanding monthly allowances of R2 500, food and clothing supplies for their dependents ended their protests only after five of them were flown to meet Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg. This followed failure by MK Chief of Staff Siphiwe Nyanda and MK Chief of Personnel Tim Ngwenya to placate the ex-combatants.

Significant protests were also held in November 2000 in the Western Cape by about 100 unemployed MK and APLA ex-fighters and on 17 August 2002 when some ex-

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710 Opening Address of The Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Mluleki George, MP, at the occasion of A Symposium On Military Veterans, University Of South Africa, (Florida Campus), 25 August 2004
711 Natal Mercury, 20 August 1993 “Ten-day sit by ANC exiles ends”; Sunday Times, 22 August 1993 “Defiant MK Cadres end siege after meeting with Mandela”
712 Sunday Times, 22 August 1993 “Defiant MK Cadres end siege after meeting with Mandela”
713 City Press, 22 August 1993 “Sit-in at ANC offices”
combatants joined the Social Movement Forum protest against the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. These protests were largely “motivated by the needs of the individuals concerned to highlight their grievances.”

The diminutive nature of the protests is notable. This could probably be explained in terms of the absence of organized national representation of the ex-fighters. However, the MKMVA postulate ex-fighter discipline and political consciousness:

The level of political consciousness of former MK cadres is very high. The procedure during recruitment to MK was that we received political orientation on the cause of the liberations struggle. Political consciousness guided the execution of particular operations. The reason why there has been no major uprising is that we politically understand that we were the nucleus of the revolution out of the majority of the people. Since the majority of the people are happy we believe that we should not hold the country hostage.

5.6.5 Special categories

A major gap in South Africa’s reintegration strategy was the absence of a psychological rehabilitation programmes for mentally distressed ex-fighters. The Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Mluleki George acknowledged:

While the recognisable fact was that many veterans lacked material support, the not so conspicuous fact was that they also needed psychological support and counseling. This also applied to members of community defence units that were formed after the un-banning of the political movements to defend residents against state sponsored violence. Many of members of these structures were youngsters who were forced by circumstance to bear arms and take lives in the process of carrying out their duty.

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716 Interview with Thabiso Radebe, MK Military Veterans Association Financial Director, 12 April 2005, Johannesburg
717 Opening Address of The Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Mluleki George, MP, at the occasion of A
Many ex-fighters suffered from PTSD. Lephophotho Mashike and Mafole Mokalobe note that 38.7% of their 410 respondents (both male and female) suffered traumatic problems. They, for example, quote distressed ex-fighters:

When I look at my feet and hands I remember an ambush in Angola and when I think about it I cannot fall asleep at night. Even fireworks affect me a lot because they sound like guns at the beginning of a war. I tried to write a letter to Madiba [Nelson Mandela] to find out what I can do to avoid this. I was told to keep myself busy in order to forget about the incident, but for me it is very difficult.

and:

In 1987 we were moving from the west to the north of Angola when Savimbi’s bandits attacked our convoy. The sound of gunshots and grenade explosions ring in my mind to this day. I am old [65 years] and supposed to enjoy the last days of my life. However, I cannot even go out of the house once I hear the sound of a gunshot. Sometimes I become so nervous that I break things in my house. I feel like fighting but have no one to fight against. I generally feel irritable and angry. My children are now used to my behaviour. No one can cure my condition except death.

Their psychological conditions were exacerbated by difficulties encountered in social and economic reintegration.

Since the demobilisation, in the townships people provoke me and I try to keep my emotions under control. I ended up having asthma. I need counseling. When you think about all those things that happened to you and how you were treated, you can go mad ... Inside I am boiling ... It's killing my mind. [MK/SDU]

In the absence of official psychosocial rehabilitation programmes and given the high costs of professional, clinical psychosocial support most ex-fighters resorted to either

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Symposium On Military Veterans, University Of South Africa, (Florida Campus), 25 August 2004

718 L. Mashike and M. Mokalobe, *Reintegration into Civilian Life: The case of former MK and APLA combatants*, TRACK TWO, Vol 12 No 1, p.21


720 L. Mashike and M. Mokalobe, *Reintegration into Civilian Life: The case of former MK and APLA combatants*, TRACK TWO, Vol 12 No 1, p.22
traditional help or peer support often with adverse results\textsuperscript{221}.

But in [relation to] going to professional counselling, we haven't got money, [we are] bankrupt. So we are just remaining here, counselling ourselves. Some are committing suicide. I have a friend who committed suicide due to this trauma problem. [MK/SDU]

I went to [try to see] a social worker here but ... I did not get [to see] her ... So now if I have a problem, where can I go? Because travelling [from] here to town, you can take the last R3.00 [with] which you could have bought bread to share with children. [MK/SDU]

Women former fighters were another special category. The presence of a strong and influential women’s movement enabled “the drafting of a gender-aware constitution after the apartheid war ended.”\textsuperscript{222} An MK female ex-combatant also said:

At the point I joined the struggle already amongst the men in the ANC the understanding politically was beginning to mature to say that women are parallels. They are as much as soldiers and partners in the liberation struggle as men. When we came back the society was happy that MK also had women. There was recognition to say that we were flowers of the nation who should be treated with respect. Already women in the country knew they had rights…Already society was beginning to grapple with those issues.\textsuperscript{223}

The societal contexts, then, aided the acceptance of the women former freedom fighters by the wider society. The gendered approach to reintegration was at least reflected in the Service Corps curriculum including baking and dressmaking. However, given the recognized shortcomings of the Service Corps the success of this approach was limited.

\textsuperscript{722} V. Farr, \textit{Gendering Demobilization as a peace building tool}, (Bonn, BICC, 2000), pp.12-13
\textsuperscript{723} Interview with Pamela Daniels, , MK ex-fighter and Managing Director, MK Military Veterans Association, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg
Another special category comprised those who were excluded from the CPR and were ineligible for demobilization and reintegration assistance. Some of these engaged in protest marches in 1995 in Cape Town and Durban to register their lament: “They used us for their political gains and then threw us in the dustbin.” There was also the exclusion of under-35s. This was a cause for bitterness.

APLA was late in entering the multiparty negotiations and it failed to submit its CPR before the 27 April 1994 deadline. Despite a presidential concession for it to submit its CPR the delay meant that some of its members were not part of the formal integration and initial demobilization and reintegration strategy. Ex-APLA combatant Gordon Mpini noted:

I did not integrate because of some doubting. Honestly the process of integration, to (for) APLA was done hastily. APLA did not have time to be oriented. Many young cadres were sensitive. We feared what happened in Namibia during the implementation of Resolution 435 would also happen in South Africa. Some APLA combatants were arrested in the assembly areas for previous operations. This made the matter worse and some who had reported for integration disappeared. Today many legitimate members have not been integrated.

5.6.6 War Veterans Associations

The establishment of war veterans associations by the concerned ex-fighters was an important development. The potential for the societies to contribute to the sustainability of erstwhile ineffective reintegrated ex-fighters was reflected in the mission statements of these associations. For instance, the Umkhonto WeSizwe Military Veterans Association

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724 Quoted in L. Mashike and M. Mokalobe, Reintegration into Civilian Life: The case of former MK and
(MKMVA) established in December 1996 vowed “To provide comprehensive services that will enable them (members) to rejoin their communities as productive citizens.” This was planned to be achieved through the sustainable capacitating of veterans through vocational training, education, and creation and development income generating projects. The Azanian People’s Liberation Army Veterans Association (APLAVA) was later established in 1997 with a similar orientation. It has, however, maintained a lower profile than MKMVA.

A gamut of organizational, human and financial resources’ problems have undermined the operations and productivity of the two associations. In the quotes below individual members lament the scenario:

Basically the intentions were good. But as we know people differ in their way of doing things and in their way of interpreting things. Since the formation of Mkhonto We Sizwe Military Veterans Association in 1996 not much has happened to better the live of its members. The first leadership of Mkhonto We Sizwe Military Veterans Association came into office and we did not see much except it had a hand in trying to help members to register for what is called special pensions.

We as MKMVA we are not asking for anything. We are asking of what is due to us legally...We are still valid as an MKMVA. If it was not an effort of this MKMVA we will not be talking of the new South Africa today. We contributed a lot. We ask what is due to us. We have struggled to make this MKVA an authentic association. Despite the fact that now it is governmentally recognized still we still meet some obstacles. When you see this office runs not because we get some assistance from the government. We go and knock into the offices of leadership. They have their own connotation of interpreting what we are trying to

_APLA combatants_, TRACK TWO, Vol 12 No 1, p.14

725 Interview with Ex-APLA Combatant Gordon Mpini, 26 August 2004, Johannesburg

726 See L. Mashike and M. Mokalobe, *Reintegration into Civilian Life: The case of former MK and APLA combatants*, TRACK TWO, Vol 12 No 1, p.24

727 Interview with Pamela Daniels, MK ex-fighter and Managing Director, MK Military Veterans Association, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg
do. Some of them do not understand. We understand the problem because we as MKMVA offices all the people outside there who are members of the MKMVA come here. We understand better. But now you see that interweaving relationship with our leadership is not there. Really there is red tape. 728

The government enacted the Military Veterans Affairs Act of 1999 as part of the new initiatives to right the deficiencies of past reintegration strategies. At post-apartheid South Africa’s first military veterans’ symposium that aimed to clarify the country’s military veterans’ framework, the Deputy Minister of Defence, Mluleki George, explained:

It has become fashionable for sections of the media have the tendency of portraying the Government generally, and the Department of Defence in particular, as having no regard for military veterans. This cannot be farther from the truth. Parliament has passed the Military Veterans Affairs Act in 1999 to address the issue of all military veterans. The Act makes provision for the creation of the Advisory Board for Military Veterans' Affairs. This Board advises the Ministry of Defence of issues pertaining to military veterans. While members of the Board were nominated on their individual capacity, they are representative of all registered military veteran associations. I have recently made a call on all unregistered veteran associations to apply to the Board for registration. The Act also tasks all government departments including provincial departments, not only the Department of Defence, to make provision for the care of military veterans. The President of the country, in addition to being the commander-in-chief of the South African National Defence Force, is designated the patron-in-chief of all military veterans by the Act. All this demonstrates the seriousness of Government with regard to the issues of military veterans.729

The establishment of a database of all military veterans was necessary to facilitate provision of the legislated welfare benefits to all registered members. Brigadier General M.D. Myamya noted that progress that had been made in meeting this challenge when he said: “What is important in South Africa is to keep a verified database of military

728 Interview with Jabulani Ephraim Sibiya, MK ex-fighter, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg
729 Opening Address of The Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Mluleki George, MP, at the occasion of A Symposium On Military Veterans, University Of South Africa, (Florida Campus), 25 August 2004
veterans so my office is doing that. We have verified more than 850 000 so that we can
give the people IDs (Defence Force cards) so that they can benefit such as being eligible
for health services from Department of Defence hospitals."

A fundamental vehicle for the effective implementation of the Act would be the creation
of a unitary and consolidated South African Military Veterans Association (SAMVA).
SAMVA would bring “all military veterans under one umbrella and for them to talk in
one voice.” A number of challenges have scuttled the formation of SAMVA. These
include perceived and real disparities between former NSF and others such as former
Union Defence Force and SADF:

Space and time is not yet ready for us. Indeed in the future it would be better for
veterans to be speak in one voice regardless of individual or political affiliation.
But the time for that is not yet here because with the former state veterans and
with us Non Statutory Forces there is a big gap there. We need to balance that
gap first and move from the point of saying we are all veterans of South Africa.
At this point in time we are not saying no to a National Military Veterans
Association. All we are saying we are still going there until such time that we
feel we at conducive ground in speaking with that voice as one.

We cannot go to SAMVA. SAMVA is (will be) well resourced. We are still at
embryonic stage. When we go there we should have something that now I am
here at SAMVA I am coming with this. Then I know there is no question of
saying I’m going to give you 5%. No, I will be dictating the percentage with
what I have and there will be no disparity.

The importance of addressing these challenges cannot be overemphasized. An analyst

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730 Interview with Brigadier General M.D. Myamya, SANDF Director Personnel Separation, 10 December
2004, Johannesburg
731 Opening Address of The Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Mluleki George, MP, at the occasion of A
Symposium On Military Veterans, University Of South Africa, (Florida Campus), 25 August 2004
732 Interview with Pamela Daniels, MK ex-fighter and Managing Director, MK Military Veterans
Association, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg
stressed:

The current military veterans’ initiatives in South Africa are only likely to be successful if the veterans associations are able to manage their internal conflicts and leadership disputes in a positive and peaceful fashion, and agree to collaborate with each other in a constructive manner so that they can become an effective and united lobby body for veterans’ affairs. \(^{734}\)

Prospects of the establishment of the national military veterans association remain uncertain:

There are two possibilities; that will never happen or some of the elite of MK and APLA will be swallowed by the dominant structures. The view is that from the rank and file soldiers that these people were our enemies and they cannot be our friends today. And they are not on the same level. Is it really fine for you to be in same veterans association with someone who is getting huge benefits at the end of the each month because of his role fighting against the liberation forces when you did not have anything? All that you got is the lump-sum package which you boxed. For us to have a truly representative national veterans association we have to put them on the same level. If you call these people to discuss broader policy issues you always have individuals raising their problems. I do not know how a veterans’ association would operate without looking at these people who have been hidden from history. They need to get their act together. As you have heard the MK veterans are divided. In Gauteng they have two structures. Then can they be really combined (with) World War veterans, Korean War veterans. \(^{735}\)

The continued absence of SAMVA has made it difficult for the military veterans, particularly ex-NSFs who have not befit from the MVA provision, to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the Act.

5.7 Repatriation and resettlement of refugees and exiles

The dismantling of apartheid structures starting in 1990 gradually excised the

\(^{733}\) Interview with Jabulani Ephraim Sibiya, MK ex-fighter, 22 October 2004, Johannesburg
\(^{734}\) Interview with Guy Lamb, 18 April 2005, Internet-Email
\(^{735}\) Interview with Lephophotho Mashike, Sociology Department, University of the Witwatersrand, 27 September 2004, Johannesburg
predilection for going into exile. In February 1990, the apartheid government’s unbanning of the anti-apartheid movements and the release of ANC leader Nelson Mandela signaled the start of the end of apartheid. Significant meetings between the government and ANC were held. The apartheid regime’s commitment to dismantling apartheid was underscored when it published the Indemnity Act of 1990 that granted immunity from prosecution of the National Executive Committee members of the ANC. This allowed some of the estimated 40 000 South African refugees and exiles worldwide thousands exiles to return home without fearing persecution.

5.7.1 The Institutional and Policy Framework

The major players in South Africa’s repatriation operation were the National Coordinating Committee for the Repatriation of South African exiles (NCCR), South African government, and UNHCR. Following the unbanning of the liberation movements including, in May 1990 the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and South African Catholic Bishops’ Conference (SACBC) undertook a “principal and initiating role” in the repatriation process. They broadly consulted with the liberation movements and other relevant South African service organizations to determine how the repatriation programme could be carried out and the role that churches could play in the repatriation programme. Organizations consulted included ANC, PAC, Black Consciousness Movement, AZAPO, Black Consciousness Movement- Azania. SACC was well grounded in South Africa’s refugee issues. It had for instance published in 1982 Refugees:

A Challenge To South African Churches that drew recommendations for refugee assistance based on its study of “the conditions of South African refugees in neighbouring countries.”

From the onset SACC displayed its willingness to learn lessons from other African countries’ experience of repatriation. Four officers from the Namibian Council of Churches Repatriation and Resettlement Committee were invited to participate as resource persons. The Namibian delegation made important recommendations including the need to involve the UNHCR (since this was an SACC initiative), training of local population, provision of financial assistance for food handouts and the need to inform the grassroots.

A major result of the consultation was the establishment of a representative National Coordinating Committee for the Repatriation of South African exiles (NCCR) comprising representatives from churches, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and liberation movements. The NCCR inaugurally met on 8 June 1990 and was envisaged as a policy-making body for the repatriation programme and transparent management of the finances that were to be involved. The SACC would raise funds from an array of sponsors.

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737 SACC, Refugees: A Challenge To South African Churches, (Braamfontein, SACC, 1982), p5. Noting inadequate assistance for refugees the report concluded with recommendations for host government; SACC and a specific SACC Ministry to Refugees Project.
740 The list of NCCR’s donor partners included Australian PHEDA, Ecumenical Decade Conference; Tutu Foundation; Oxfam; Cafod; Canadian Government; Caritas Neerlandica; WCC; Ambassade de Landen; Brot fur die Welt; Caritas Austria; Japanese Government; HEKS, Caritas Italiana
Repatriation was meant to be entirely voluntary and non-discriminatory on the basis of ideological affiliations.\textsuperscript{741}

The NCCR appointed a National Executive Committee (NEC) to supervise the implementation of the repatriation programme. The NEC was assisted by two sub committees: the Finance Committee responsible for financial policy and matters and the Staff Committee responsible for human resources issues.\textsuperscript{742} The NCCR worked with coordinators from a comprehensive array of nine specialist task forces at the national and regional levels: Communication; Employment; Education and Training; Health, Counselling and Welfare; Legal and Protection; Housing; Transport and Logistics; Reception and Registration. The 13 regional offices\textsuperscript{743} facilitated decision making, supervision and implementation at the regional level.

A full-time staff complement maintained the structure and carried out the tasks of the programme. A National Coordinator who directed the implementation of the programme policy and acted as the liaison person between the staff, the committees, task forces and returnees themselves, headed this full-time staff. In a move that enabled synchronized programme planning and implementation the National Coordinator sat on both the NCCR and NEC.\textsuperscript{744} The National Coordinator was supported by, among others, a Regional Liaison Officer, an organizing secretary for the Task forces, and provision for a Financial

\textsuperscript{741} SACC/SACBC, Report on the \textit{National Consultation On The Repatriation of South African Exiles}, held at Koinonia, Judith’s Paarl, Johannesburg, 16-18 May 1990,p.4
\textsuperscript{742} NCCR Files, \textit{Repatriation of South African Exiles}, November 1990
\textsuperscript{743} These were at Orange Free State; Pretoria; Albany; Eastern Cape; Transkei; Northern Transvaal; Witwatersrand; Northern Cape; Eastern Transvaal; Western Cape; Natal; Border; and Vaal.
\textsuperscript{744} NCCR, \textit{NCCR Annual Report}, May 31\textsuperscript{st} 1991
and Communications Officer. Assistants, secretaries and a receptionist completed the staff establishment at the NCCR office. At the regional level there was a coordinator, an administrative secretary as well as volunteers for each region.

SACC’s initiative must be seen in the light of the South African government’s objection to the involvement of external organizations, least of all the UN. The government insisted that the implementation of the programme was “essentially South African and does not require the assistance of any outside elements” a decision that was underpinned by the strained relationship between the apartheid government and the UN.745 Apartheid South Africa, indeed, had been barred from the UN since 1974. Mike Bester, Chief Director of Migration in the Home Affairs Department that was responsible for coordinating the government’s role in the repatriation process reportedly said South Africa would not compromise its sovereignty by allowing the UN a repatriation role inside the country.746 This, notwithstanding, the NCCR’s stated that the “UNHCR holds the necessary expertise for the repatriation programme to be able to operate smoothly. The UNHCR also holds the key to the required financial support of the programme by member nations of the international community.”747

The South African government was disinclined to assume responsibility of assisting the returnees who were mainly liberation movement supporters. It took a policy decision not to provide special returnees’ reintegration assistance. In March 1991, Gene Louw,

746 *Business Day*, 8 January 1991 “Govt says no to exiles’ bills”
Minister of Home Affairs, said no specific financial or assistance “package” was available to exiles and “it must be remembered that the vast majority of the returnees are South African citizens and they will therefore be entitled to normal state assistance and will be integrated in existing assistance programmes.” He cited the impact of sanctions as well as the wider unemployment and housing problems as reasons.

Funding and logistical inadequacies effectively inhibited the roll out of a massive repatriation operation during the UNHCR-less early stages. For example:

The returnees have experienced problems in housing and unemployment and in (the) education of their children. A grant policy of single persons receiving R500, families R800 and R100 per child per month as well as accommodation grants of R300 per single person per month and families R600 plus R50 for each child and educational grants for pre-tertiary education of each child has been adopted, but has not been implemented in full because of lack of funds…These sums remain in plan and policy only.

This was unsurprising given the government’s non-committal stance. Bester, Chief Director of Migration in the Home Affairs Department that was responsible for coordinating government’s role in the repatriation process, urged the NCCR and liberation movements to fundraise.

One would even expect it (ANC) to look at such aspects as temporary accommodation in South Africa until these people can move to the various areas in South Africa, where they want to establish themselves. For every person that left, for whatever reasons, thousands remained. The aspirations and expectations of the returnees must never exceed those of the people who stayed. Their needs and requirements must be absorbed into the total requirements existing in their

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748 Citizen, 6 March 1991 “No priority for returning exiles” See also Sunday Star, 27 October 1991 “Who must care for returning exiles- Govt or UNHCR”
749 NCCR, NCCR Annual Report, May 31st 1991
The apartheid government’s policy of indemnity was not general but required returnees to apply individually in order to be able to repatriate. This did not help the already stuttering process. By May 1991,

The NCCR has to report that it is a victim of the situation. The plans are made, the people are ready, the systems are established, but only a little progress can be reported and only a small number of exiles have returned home. The exciting possibilities of return and reunion are bogged down in a quagmire of state bureaucracy. The anticipated flow of persons is only a trickle because of the need for an amnesty for all political exiles.  

By 31 May 1991 only 1 421 returnees had been officially registered by the NCCR. Under these circumstances the NCCR effectively postponed its repatriation operation until the government invited UNHCR.

The adverse situation surrounding the repatriation programme improved when the South African government ultimately agreed to UNHCR assistance with the return of refugees and political exiles. This followed many discussions involving UNHCR, NCCR, ANC and the government. A number of agreements and arrangements concluded by the Government of South Africa and the UNHCR laid the basis for the latter’s involvement in the repatriation process. These included the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Geneva on 4 September, 1991, and the Agreement governing the Legal Status, Privileges and Immunities of the UNHCR Office and its Personnel in South Africa, signed in

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{750} Business Day, 8 January 1991 “Govt says no to exiles’ bills”
\textsuperscript{751} NCCR, \textit{NCCR Annual Report}, May 31\textsuperscript{st} 1991
\textsuperscript{752} NCCR, \textit{NCCR Annual Report}, May 31\textsuperscript{st} 1991}

The agreements provided for a comprehensive amnesty for all political offences, a mechanism allowing the UNHCR to make representations on behalf of persons not granted amnesty, the establishment of an historic UNHCR presence in South Africa and complete freedom of movement for returnees within South Africa. The amnesty that was granted to all exiles and refugees clarified their legal status. Acting pursuant to these agreements and arrangements, the UNHCR “established and maintained a temporary presence in South Africa in order solely to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of former South African refugees and political exiles and to secure their effective reintegration in society”754 This confidence-building measure removed hitherto obstacles to the UNHCR repatriation process for South African refugees and political exiles.

The UN Secretary General’s decision to include Mrs. Sadako Ogata, High Commissioner for Refugees, Professor Ibrahim Gambari, Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid and Mr. Sotirios Mousouris, Assistant Secretary-General for the Centre against Apartheid in the UN observer delegation to CODESA was important. This enabled the UNHCR to keep abreast of proceedings and make appropriate plans for the repatriation process. The UNHCR eventually deployed a 24-strong team countrywide in South Africa including six Associate Repatriation Officers seconded by Netherlands.

The UNHCR’s repatriation and reintegration operation would include:

- transportation to the returnee’s final destination
- immediate assistance, which may take the form of food, basic domestic utensils and temporary shelter for each family, over a period to be agreed, and/or a one-time cash grant to cover essential needs
- possible assistance for destitute returnees\textsuperscript{755}

In theory reintegration assistance was planned to be needs-based and tailor-made for individual returnees to strategically facilitate their productive employment.\textsuperscript{756}

UNHCR teamed up with other specialized agencies. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) joined the offices of the UNHCR in South Africa to assist in the reintegration of returnees, particularly women and children. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was also an implementing partner for the UNHCR and it organized aircraft for the transportation of exiles. The NCCR was a conversant local implementing partner in all aspects of the programme.

Since South Africa’s repatriation operation was carried out against a backdrop of a

\textsuperscript{755} Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees on the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of South African returnees – August 1991

\textsuperscript{756} Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees on the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of South African returnees – August 1991
volatile political and security environment the UNHCR emphasized the discretion of the repatriates:

This information sheet is intended to give you in broad outline, the gist of the agreement reached and the procedures to be followed to facilitate your return. THE DECISION TO RETURN IS YOURS AND YOURS ALONE and it should not be influenced by instructions you may received from any one else.

and the Voluntary Repatriation Application Form(s) completed by potential returnees stated:

Thereafter, you will SIGN THE DECLARATION TO SHOW that your request to repatriate is being made of YOUR OWN FREE WILL. 757

The UNHCR assisted the return of 7 300 South Africans ahead of the historic first party multiparty elections in 1994.758 This was a far smaller number than what the UNHCR had anticipated. It had estimated that about 40 000 South African refugees and exiles worldwide would apply for voluntary repatriation.759 The UNHCR had an intial budget of US$28 356 400 for the repatriation process.760

5.7.2 Roll out of Repatriation and Resettlement

Under its September 1991 mandate the UN refugee agency started its voluntary repatriation process in October 1991. On 12 December 1991 the first group of 120 exiles

758 Address by Mrs. S. Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees to the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa Refugee Crises in Africa: Challenges and Solutions, Cape Town, 1997.
returned to South Africa under the agreement reached by UNHCR and the South African authorities arrived in Johannesburg from Tanzania. By the end of 1994, approximately 14,000 exiles had returned, including 7,303 who returned with UNHCR assistance and an estimated 6,000 who voluntarily repatriated under other auspices. An additional 3,500 exiles remained registered with the UNHCR and cleared for repatriation, but they had chosen not to return.\textsuperscript{761} According to UNHCR reluctance to return was directly linked to South Africa’s chronic economic problems such as high inflation, unemployment and housing shortage.\textsuperscript{762} Notwithstanding this outstanding caseload on 15 May 1995, the United Nations acted to end the refugee status afforded to South Africans abroad. Thousands more returned on their own.

Chartered flights were organized by the UNHCR and its implementing partners, including IOM, to transport most returnees from Tanzania, Botswana and Namibia. Those from Zambia and Europe arrived on commercial airline flights. These were received at the main reception centres at Johannesburg, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. The NCCR’s Reception and Registration Task Force welcomed the exiles, facilitated their registration and catered for their interim needs until departure for final destinations.

Despite the amnesty, South African exiles that elected to return did so while the apartheid government that persecuted or abused them was still in power and continued some of its

\textsuperscript{760} UNHCR, South Africa Information Bulletin, No 1, 12 February 1992, p.3
abuses. The returnees, who were mainly anti-apartheid activists and supporters, returned to “South Africa (whose white minority government has eased but not ended apartheid or taken all the necessary steps toward majority rule).” The apartheid machinery was still intact and at entry points stunned the returnees: “I thought ‘Oh God, it’s all the same old Boer.’”

The SACC/SACBC divided the exiles into the following broad categories:

- members of liberation movements
- trained and armed forces (soldiers) of the liberation movements
- non-aligned groups—those not belonging to any of the liberation movements or organizations (some under UNHCR protection)
- conscientious objectors
- “Askaris”—internal defectors
- other South African exiles who left the country for various reasons other than security considerations

The classification was not based on age, education and skills, geographic location, gender and specific needs and did not reflect the heterogeneity among the returnees. The Leadership Society, however, pointed out that the

Real profile of exiles is more complex: the generational differences echo and underscore marked class differences…Those who left in the 1960s and early 1970s are, by and large, widely traveled and well educated. While the youth who left in the 1980s might find it easier to trace their families, the older generation

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762 UNHCR, *South Africa Information Bulletin*, No 1, 12 February 1992, p.3
764 *Sunday Star*, 10 March 1991 “Stunned return to the new South Africa”
will have more skills to barter an already tight job market. The leaders tend to be middle class, but the rank-and-file will return to a daily situation of grind.\textsuperscript{766}

Indeed most of the leadership managed to secure posts in the post independence cabinet and bureaucracy as well as in political party employment. As we shall see later, for many “homelessness, unemployment, violence – this will be (was) the pain of homecoming.”\textsuperscript{767}

The UNHCR partnered with the NCCR to provide for the immediate needs of returnees. Between 1991 and 1992 it channelled about R55 million for the reintegration of exiles through the NCCR.\textsuperscript{768} From this amount the NCCR gave grants of R4250 to returnees above 18 years.\textsuperscript{769}

The actual number of beneficiaries was around 15 000. This necessitated a program review that would in addition to taking account of the reduced number also consider the needs of the beneficiaries during the six-month period.\textsuperscript{770}

Just like the ex-combatants, civilian returnees also encountered serious employment problems “in days of a slow economy and large numbers of unemployed.”\textsuperscript{771} A series of newspaper reports revealed this.\textsuperscript{772} According to Moss Chikane, NCCR National Coordinator, “The unskilled are (were) facing a more serious problem. They have to

\textsuperscript{766} \textit{Leadership Society}, “Return of the Exiles”, p.38
\textsuperscript{767} \textit{Leadership Society}, “Return of the Exiles”, p.38
\textsuperscript{768} \textit{Sowetan}, 7 July 1993 “Sad Plight of ex-exiles”
\textsuperscript{769} \textit{Sowetan}, 15 April 1992 “Exiles swelling the jobless queue”
\textsuperscript{770} UNHCR, South Africa Information Bulletin, No 1, 12 February 1992, p.3
\textsuperscript{771} NCCR, \textit{NCCR Annual Report}, May 31\textsuperscript{st} 1991
\textsuperscript{772} See for example \textit{Sowetan}, 13 April 1992 “When home is less sweet”; \textit{Sowetan}, 14 April 1992 “Struggle to make a living”; \textit{Sunday Star} 10 May 1992 “No jobs, so former exiles may leave”; \textit{The Star}, 24 July 1992 “Concern over plight of returned exiles in PWV”
compete with millions of the other unemployed people. In the meantime we are sending lists of names to employer organizations for them to pick whoever they want.”\textsuperscript{773} The crisis affected even skilled returnees: “South Africa’s skilled former exiles are encountering closed doors in their desperate quest for work.”\textsuperscript{774}

“Most of the professional exiles have years of experience but find themselves in a catch 22 situation because there are certain South African standards they are required to meet in order to get jobs.”\textsuperscript{775} Qualified returnees such as pilots, with internationally recognized experience, found it particularly difficult to “penetrate what was traditionally white monopoly sector(s).”\textsuperscript{776} Other examples include the requirement for doctors to enroll for internship programmes and engineers to register with engineer associations with no guaranteed employment prospects in an era of high unemployment rates of about 40%.

Negative employer perceptions also affected returnee employment prospects. “(T)he rate of unemployment is high among exiles despite our skills, because of employer attitudes. They see us as communists and a threat to stability in their companies.”\textsuperscript{777}

The magnitude of the employment difficulties was enormous such that at one time the NCCR’s advised exiles who were employed in their host countries to postpone return. Willy Leslie, off the NCCR, stated: “We in the NCCR would like to discourage people

\textsuperscript{773} The Star, 16 January 1992 “Returnees battle prejudice and unemployment”
\textsuperscript{774} Sunday Star 10 May 1992 “No jobs, so former exiles may leave”
\textsuperscript{775} NCCR National Coordinator Moss Chikane quoted in Sowetan, 15 April 1992 “Exiles swelling the jobless queue”
\textsuperscript{776} The Star, 24 July 1992 “Concern over plight of returned exiles in PWV”
\textsuperscript{777} Sowetan, 14 April 1992 “Struggle to make a living”
who are in gainful employment wherever they are around the world – and particularly – those studying – from giving up their studies or jobs (to come back) until the economic and political situation in South Africa changes.”

Initiatives to start income generating projects were hampered by lack of collateral against bank loans. “I need about R10,000 capital but these institutions want a guarantee that I will be able to pay them back. I do not own any property, so I cannot provide them with security.”

Ownership of residential properties could have presented returnees with appropriate collateral against bank credit. However, as with the high unemployment rates, there were no immediate tangible solutions to the housing difficulties that faced the 7.4 million South Africans who lacked adequate housing as of November 1990.

In what would have been an exceptional and productive strategy to help stranded returnees to reintegrate into mainstream society, returnees at the Moira Henderson transit hostel in Woodstock planned to set up a forum to voice their problems. These plans appear to have hit a snag as the residents of the hostel remained homeless and endured “very hard” months after NCCR grants were frozen. ANC spokesman Mr Willie Hofmeyer said his organization was negotiating with various institutions to provide

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778 Sunday Tribune, 12 January 1992 “Returning exiles find jobs hard to come by”
779 Sowetan, 14 April 1992 “Struggle to make a living”
780 NCCR, NCCR Annual Report, May 31st 1991
781 Weekend Argus, 5 June 1993 “Help us, plead exiles”
funding and housing for the exiles in an effort to resolve the problem.

"(But) the government has to take its share of the responsibility of the returning exiles and help to find them housing and employment so they can be self supporting."\(^{783}\)

The result was an overdependence on NCCR grants that had been meant for a limited period. The unemployed returnees were exposed when their beneficiaryship expired or when the NCCR was ultimately disbanded following corruption scandals.\(^{784}\)

In one assistance plan the NCCR bought and distributed R500 000 worth of clothes for unemployed returnees to sell. The returnees would retain the profit while reimbursing the NCCR the cost to facilitate the aid of other returnees in need. However, “no mechanisms had been laid down on how the money would be collected” so that after the sale of the clothes by 14 June 1993 “only R2000 had been collected by the NCCR.”\(^{785}\)

In spite of the progress that it recorded in presiding over the repatriation programme the NCCR financial control and accounting system was lax and open to abuse. In August 1992, for instance, fraud involving R300 000 was discovered; only R200 000 was recovered.\(^{786}\) The NCCR had also failed to reconcile the master list of returnees it assisted. There were also allegations that some ‘returnees’ had claimed grants on the

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\(^{784}\) *Sunday Star*, 10 May 1992 “No jobs, so former exiles may leave”; *The Star*, 13 July 1993 “Task Force to aid exiles”; *Business Day*, 12 July 1993 “Churches task force to help returned exiles”

\(^{785}\) *Sowetan*, 14 June 1993 “Naivety and greed at the NCCR”

\(^{786}\) *Sowetan*, 14 June 1993 “Naivety and greed at the NCCR”
using false UN documents. The lack of a tight book-keeping system, the attendant fraud and corruption resulted in the dissolution of the NCCR in 1993. SACC Secretary-General, Frank Chikane, said the UNHCR would take over the reception of exiles in South Africa. At the recommendation of the SACC/SACBC a criminal investigation and an independent commission of inquiry were instituted to examine the disappearance of the money.787

The subsequent dissolution of the NCCR and the freezing of the assistance, including financial grants, on which most returnees solely depended, exposed them. Notwithstanding these operational problems, for humanitarian and stability reasons, it was crucial to ensure that in the post-NCCR era desperate returnees would not “be lured into crime, or into committing acts of violence on behalf of opposition political parties.”788 As part of its exit strategy the SACC planned to mandate a national Task force to continue returnee assistance hitherto provided for by NCCR

5.8 Conclusion

South Africa’s DDRRR process had significant novelties. It was, in the main, based on national ownership and management of a domestically crafted national programme. The roles of international actors were limited. The repatriation operation had some semblance of external involvement; the UNHCR came on board following their belated invitation.

787 “Commission Set Up To Investigate NCCR Fraud”
788 Business Day, 12 July 1993, “Churches task force to help returned exiles”

346
They established a strategic partnership with the SACC/NCCR who already had laid some groundwork for the repatriation operation.

The anti-apartheid struggle was not an intense military struggle even though the ANC and PAC embraced warfare as part of their broader strategies. The liberation movements were divided while the apartheid state’s security forces were organized around various formations. The struggle did not end with a military victory but through local multiparty negotiations which led to a compromise deal between the National Party government and the ANC. The negotiations were not inclusive as other parties to the conflict such as PAC and Inkhata were not involved. Special emphasis during these negotiations was placed on the establishment of a new defence force. This had negative implications for the timely plan of comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable DDRRR, a programme that was conceived as an afterthought. The ensuing volatile political and security contexts hamstrung disarmament initiatives, contributing to the proliferation of illicit small arms, some of which were later used as tools of armed criminality.

The White Paper on Defence, of 1996, later clarified a strategy that attempted to link DDR with the broader Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). However, the restricted success of RDP and the succeeding Growth, Employment and Redistribution's macro-economic strategy, in creating employment opportunities meant many unemployed former combatants did not benefit. The post-apartheid economic contexts continued to be characterized by ‘jobless growth’ and made impossible the large-scale reintegration of ex-combatants and returnees into the mainstream economy.
Notwithstanding evident reintegration deficits, besides involvement in isolated armed criminality and diminutive protests, ex-combatants have not been a major disruptive influence, although the possibility of this cannot be ruled out. The fact that the government is still grappling with finance-intensive military veterans’ reintegration issues a decade into independence has, however, postponed the realization of a financial “peace dividend”. The operationalization of legislation passed in 1999, in an attempt to remedy earlier ineffective reintegration, has ever since been partly hamstrung by differences among South Africa’s heterogeneous military veterans population. This has not been helped by the sluggishness surrounding the broadening of the erstwhile militaristic institutional framework for implementing the reintegration process to include appropriate civilian agencies and role players.

While the UNHCR had the proven and appropriate institutional capacity its role in the repatriation operation was restricted by the apartheid government. The National Party government had a strained relationship with the UN and was averse to external assistance with the process. It was also reluctant to provide specific reintegration assistance to the returnees; the majority perceived to be supporters of the liberation movements. The temporary office eventually established by UNHCR in South Africa assisted the repatriation of a small heterogeneous returnee population during the transitional period.

The time-specific UNHCR funded grants and assistance administered by the NCCR expired leaving many ineffectively reintegrated returnees exposed. Some returnees such
as the leadership of the nationalist movements managed to secure posts in the post-election bureaucracy. However, for many, like with the ordinary ex-fighter, the socio-economic legacy of apartheid made prospects of self-reliance unattainable and confined them to unemployment and homelessness.