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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Faculty of Humanities

School of Social Sciences

Department of International Relations

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone

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Research Report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations in the School of Social Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Johannesburg, Sunday, June 21, 2009

DECLARATION

I, **Joan Winfred LEMA** do hereby declare, certify and affirm that the work presented in this research is my own, and that I have received no other assistance than stated sources and citations. It has not been presented to any degree or examination at this or other University or Institution. It is hereby presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in the Department of International Relations in the School of Social Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Joan Winfred LEMA

Signed…….

Date…….

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the Almighty God for all His infinite goodness. I thank Him for His continuous guidance through the course of this research, and for keeping my spirits up when the muses failed me. Without His lifting me up when this thesis seemed interminable, I doubt it should ever have been completed. I thank Him for helping me realise part of my hopes and dreams. I will praise and glorify Him forever. Amen

I dedicate this thesis to children and women all over the world who have suffered from armed conflict, and to all those who care for children and women all over the world.

To my parents Mr. and Mrs. Winfred Lema for their inspiration and dedication towards my education and for making me become who I am today. You have been with me every step of the way, through good times and bad. You have taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time. May God bring more abundance into your lives. Thank you for everything. I love you!

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to all those who believe in the richness of learning.

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There are a number of people without whom this thesis might not have been written, and to whom I am greatly indebted.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to explore the processes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone within the context of post-conflict peace building. International and local stakeholders including the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation Reintegration (NCDDR) and World Bank were responsible for DDR. The DDR of female adult combatants and girl soldiers was essential as part of the broader strategies to prevent the reoccurrence of violence and creating conditions for sustainable peace and development. It was aimed at transforming female ex-combatants into a civilian status congruent with peace after eleven years of horrific civil war in Sierra Leone that involved rebel forces, principally the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), and the government's Civil Defence Forces (CDF). The DDR process has been criticized in that female ex-combatants were often invisible and their needs disregarded.

This study investigates the role of women in post-conflict peace building efforts, specifically DDR in Sierra Leone. Its nub is to critically assess the design, implementation and impact of the DDR of female ex-combatants. It focuses particularly on how female combatants are affected by current gender, security and international relations discourses. It assesses the progress made by the relevant international and local institutions in implementing international policies and guidelines on the DDR of female ex-combatants, in Sierra Leone; draws wider conclusions about achievements made and suggests lessons that may be applicable widely.

Keywords: disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, female ex-combatants, Sierra Leone

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

A	AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
	AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
	APC	All People's Congress
	AU	African Union
C	CDF	Civil Defence Force
	CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
	CEIP	Community Education Investments Programme
	CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
	CREP	Community Rapid Education Programme
	CTP	Cape Town Principles
D	DDA	Department for Disarmament Affairs
	DDR	Disarmament Demobilisation Reintegration
	DDRR	disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation and reconstruction
	DfID	Department for International Development
	DPLO	Department of Peacekeeping
	DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
	ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group
E	ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
F	FAAFG	Females Associated with Armed Forces and Groups
	FAWE	Forum For African Women Educationalists
H	HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
I	ICC	International Courts like the International Criminal Court
	INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
M	MAMAS	Mothers Against Military Advancement in Sierra Leone
	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
N	NCDDR	National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
	NCRRR	National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation

	NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
	NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
O	OSAA	Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
P	PCRD	Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development
R	RSLMF	Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces
	RUF	Revolutionary United Front
S	SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
	SIDDR	Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
	SHRC	Sierra Leone Human Rights Commission
	SLA	Sierra Leone Army
	SLAWW	Sierra Leone Association for Women's Welfare
	SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
	STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
T	TEP	Training and Employment Program
	TRCs	Truth and Reconciliation Commissions
U	UK	United Kingdom
	UN	United Nations
	UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
	UNDPKO	United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations
	UNDDA	United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs
	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
	UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
	UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
	UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone
	UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
V	VVF	Vesico-vaginal fistula
W	WMP	Women's Movement for Peace

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

> "One of today's greatest development challenges is turning policy into practice. This is especially the case in the realm of women's rights and gender equality, where the commitments made at the international and national levels remain far from the day-to-day realities of women's lives[1]".

Over the past decade, it has become clear that many attempts at sustainable peace building are inadequate without the equal inclusion of women and yet the peace process to date has largely ignored female ex-combatants. The complex Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)[2] of ex-combatants is a crucial component of the post-conflict peace building process. It has also become clear that DDR is difficult and that it is intertwined with other war to peace transitions, such as establishing security and legitimate governance, economic recovery, and transitional justice. Failure to quickly and thoroughly consider DDR poses a threat to the transition from war to peace and preventing, and can cause a relapse into conflict. The exclusion of women from peace processes, and by extension DDR crafting and implementation, has important consequences for female ex-combatants and for their sense of identity. Traditionally, reports and studies on the effects of peace-building tend to incorporate women in the general category of combatants' without regard to the different experiences of men and women civilians. There is increasing acknowledgment that female ex-combatant's rights and concerns should be integrated within all phases of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building activities. The issue of female ex-combatants affected by armed conflict has been placed firmly on the peace and security agenda of the United Nations (UN). It also provides a framework for the inclusion of women in peace processes and in all aspects of peace and security work. This means that the protection of female ex-combatants and their rights must be considered from the beginning of peacemaking efforts, when peace

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[1] Valasek Kristin., Securing Equality, Engendering Peace: A guide to policy and planning on women peace and security (UNSCR 1325), Santo Domingo: UN INSTRAW, 2006 p i

[2] Nat J. Colletta, Markus Kostner, and Ingo Wiederhofer, "Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration: Lessons and Liabilities in Reconstruction," in When States Fail: Causes and Consequences, ed. Robert I. Rotberg Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004, p 170

agreements are being negotiated, in the mandates of peace operations and during post-conflict activities.

Under the Charter of the UN, the Security Council has a primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Women's concerns, including the protection of those affected by armed conflict, are increasingly taken into account by the Security Council. Despite the diverse debates, resolutions and declarations on women and armed conflict that have been carried out by the Council since the 1990s, the international community confirmed in October 2000 that despite the existence of relevant guidelines and commitments, women and girls were not sufficiently included in peace and reconciliation processes, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) [3]. It is against this backdrop that United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 urges that all disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes address the special needs of women[4], particularly in education, vocational training, and psychosocial support. The Resolution has provided an educational and organising tool for women's organisations and networks throughout the world[5]. While strategies for its effective implementation continue to be discussed in a variety of fora[6], but the wider aspect of the problem is ignored. The terrain has changed fundamentally since its inception in 2000 and the scope for development is considerable. For example, until recently, gender violence against women was regarded as an inevitable aspect of armed conflict.

In Sierra Leone, DDR was implemented in the context of the Lomé Peace Accord following protracted armed conflict involving a substantial female combatant population[7]. The accord significantly endorsed the importance of stressing a DDR process that prioritized the needs of women[8] and girl combatants[9] in peace agreements in order to prevent the recurrence of

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[3] Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, S/RES/1325, Security Council, 31 October 2000
[4] United Nations, Security Council resolution 1314,S/RES/1314 2000, United Nations, New York, 11August 2000 article 13
[5] Peace Women Contacts http://www.peacewomen.org/contacts/conindex.html, accessed 12th November 2008
[6] The 1325 E-discussion at http://www.womenwarpeace.org/csw/1325_home.htm, accessed 12th November, 2008
[7] The Lomé Peace Accord, 7 July 1999, Section XXXVIII, para. 2
[8] *Loc Cit*
[9] *ibid* Article XXX

conflict and to support the achievement of sustainable peace in the country. In 1996, the Government of Sierra Leone created a Ministry for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, which would subsequently become the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR)[10]. The Commission had a department that was charged with the DDR of various armed groups. In July 1998 this department was reorganised as the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR). Its main aim was to provide short-term security so that the process would be sustainable over time. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was deployed in 1999 to assist in the implementation of the DDR plan. UNAMSIL was responsible for the disarmament phase of the process while the World Bank, various local and international NGOs implemented the bulk of the reintegration programs in close cooperation with the NCDDR. While UNAMSIL played a vital role in kick-starting DDR with disarmament, the government's National Commission for DDR (NCDDR) led the process. Foreign donors, however, provided the funding and bilateral agencies and NGOs provided the operational capacity for reintegration.

This study aims at assessing the implementation and impacts of the DDR of female ex-combatants within the framework of the peace process in Sierra Leone. It considers the influence of the provisions for DDR in peace agreements, the definitions of combatant and eligibility criteria for process entry, and institutional responsibility of DDR in relation to female combatants. The thesis goes further into describing the challenges facing the international community, regional, international and local organizations that play a role in palliating conflict around the world as well as the implementation of international policies and guidelines. Despite the ascendancy in the debate around the DDR of female combatants, this thesis reveals there are a plethora of issues hindering the process's potential to contribute to transforming and improving the status of female ex-combatants and achieve sustainable peace. These factors include lack of planning, funding, commitment, co-ordination and communication bottlenecks. The thesis ends with some conclusions on the achievements and shortcomings of Sierra Leone's experience and offers some suggestions for future endeavours to achieve durable peace necessary for long-term development.

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[10] Evenson E. M. "Truth and Justice in Sierra Leone: Coordination between Commission and Court." Columbia Law Review Vol. 104 2004 p 735

Statement of Research Problem

Despite the existence of an internationally agreed legal framework towards gender equality, there are formidable challenges in designing and implementing DDR processes that successfully address the specific needs of female ex-combatants in post-conflict peace-building situations. There has been significant progress in the second half of the twentieth century in stabling norms and standards for DDR as part of peace building. Yet, despite of the significant progress made in establishing the norms and standards, there remain shortcomings in the actual practice of implementing DDR of female ex-combatants so that there is a positive impact on the ground for achieving sustainable peace. For instance, despite the appeals found in the UNSR 1325 report, the reality is that the needs of female ex-combatants are often not addressed in the initial DDR process. The reality is that the needs of female ex-combatants are often not addressed in the initial DDR process, leaving them vulnerable. It is argued that female ex-combatants have been neglected because of the lack of recognition of their participation in fighting forces and the suffering they have experienced. Women who have been active in armed struggle often find the return to civilian life difficult. As Birgitte Sørensen remarks "Even though the numbers of women involved in armed groups and forces have steadily increased, a number of DDR processes have underestimated their importance in the transformation of societies from war to peace[11]". Gender blind or insensitive DDR processes exacerbate the difficulties encountered by female ex-combatants in this transition. There is also justified concern that "even when women participate or are included in formal peace negotiations, their role can be limited to a formal presence without having the capacity, or mandate to contribute to setting or shaping the agenda of such negotiations[12]". Hence, there is still much work to do to make engendering peace a reality.

To leave female ex-combatants out of DDR processes is not only a violation of their right to participate but also undermines the objectives of DDR. The DDR of female ex-combatants is critical towards achieving their human security and a steady reconciliation process as part of

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[11] Sørensen Birgitte Refslund, 'Women and Post-conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources', Occasional Paper No 3, The War-torn Societies Project, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) 1998 p 5

[12] United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, "Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Peace Agreements," Peace agreements as a means for promoting gender equality and ensuring participation of women A framework of model provisions, EGM/PEACE/2003/ REPORT, 10 December 2003 Ottawa, Canada p 7

post-conflict peace-building. The most important functions of DDR is arguably the provision of training and support for ex-combatants to help them understand the way their society has changed as a result of conflict and how they might reintegrate into post-conflict social, economic and political structures. In contemporary DDR, it is important to emphasise on female ex-combatants as war affected persons, social agents of change, and beneficiaries of assistance. In Sierra Leone, women and girls were active agents in armed conflict either as combatants or as service providers. The three main armed groups accused of perpetrating violations against women and girls were the Revolutionary United Front (RUF); the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), a faction within the national army that joined forces with the rebels; and the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) fighting on the side of the government. Therefore, they were supposed to be recognized as active agents rather than passive victims in the DDR process so as to avoid undermining the peace process.

The efforts to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone have not succeeded. The DDR process in Sierra Leone highlighted the fact that female ex-combatants were often invisible and their needs overlooked[13], despite their involvement in armed groups and ostensible consideration in the text of the Lomé Accord. Female combatants were more marginalised than other groups of women in conflict and post-conflict societies due to their involvement in direct military combat, which was stereotypically understood to be a male domain. As Lori Handrahan explains, "while gender may be only one concern for women, it is a pivotal one, since women's fundamental human rights and dignity are often caught in the middle of multiple male power struggles played out as identity norms[14]". This was evident in Sierra Leone where DDR processes traditionally operated with the narrow objective to disarm men with guns. It generally failed to account for the fact that women can be armed combatants and that they also help maintain and enable armed groups. In its initial phases, the DDR process had a "one-man, one-gun" eligibility policy; every ex-combatant with a weapon was invited to turn it in, in order to participate in the process. Hence, the UN's definition of "combatant" excluded those who did not have weapons to turn

[13] The Secretary-General's Study Women, Peace and Security. United Nations, New York. 2002. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/eWPS.pdf, accessed 29th October, 2008

[14] Handrahan Lori, Gender and Post-Conflict Reconstruction. Security Dialogue: Special Issue Gender and Security Vol. 35 No. 4 2004 pp 343, 429–445.

in such as: the female combatants who had served in the armed factions as nurses, cooks and sex workers or slaves.

The issue of female ex-combatants does not end with the signing of a peace treaty. The risky situation of female ex-combatants has frequently been seen as a secondary priority and postponed to the development phase[15]. Thus, Sierra Leone's DDR process has failed to incorporate a gender perspective as they relied on gender-blind theories and conceptualizations of the war-to-peace transition. This has had significant implications on women's lives in post-conflict societies in general. Considering the position of women in the conflict, the Lomé Peace Accord asserts:

> Given that women have been particularly victimised during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potential in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes, to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone[16].

Despite the good intention of the Accord, the planning and implementation of DDR projects aimed at female ex-combatants was poor and inflexible and ended up excluding many eligible female combatants. In Sierra Leone, the challenge of defining who is eligible for benefits was multidimensional. How 'beneficiaries' were defined had an impact on the way that procedures for accessing the benefits were designed, and it had profound impact on female ex-combatants. It can be argued that one reason for this was that the aim of DDR was to achieve political stability and security and this is why there was a gap. In Sierra Leone, it was found that the exclusion of female ex-combatants in the DDR process was due to the implementation and development of narrow policies that failed to include their needs.. To expound on one example, the DDR illustrates cases where women may have been combatants but were not registered and hence were not eligible for the DDR process because of their gender. Even where female ex-combatants are registered, they are still barred from accessing DDR because they are women. This report serves to tap into literature on the role of female ex-combatants' in armed conflict and post-conflict in Sierra Leone. It asks many questions

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[15] Sørensen, Birgitte Refslund Op Cit. p 26
[16] The Lomé Peace Accord, 7 July 1999, Section XXXVIII, para. 2

regarding the DDR of female ex-combatants including whether there is a need for a more comprehensive consideration of DDR by acknowledging and responding to its social, economic and political implications. Subsequently, the research questions such implications and possible approaches to DDR. Furthermore, the DDR processes are not only adequate, but run the risk of reinforcing existing gender inequalities in local communities and exacerbating economic hardships for women participating in armed conflicts. The value added by the study will be its proposal to address the challenge in a comprehensive way.

Rationale

Despite a groundswell attention to the interrelationship between gendered nature of violence and conflict and the need to address the invisibility of female ex-combatants, a number of key areas need further analysis and research on gender and DDR. The UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security adopted in October 2000 addresses the impact of armed conflict on women as well as their undervalued contribution to conflict prevention and peace-building[17]. This thesis is mainly inspired by the fact that during conflict and post-conflict situations the needs and desires of female ex-combatants desires often stand in stark contrast to the construction of DDR[18]. Firstly, the study is inspired mainly by female ex-combatants affected by conflict and thus by the consequences of a peace agreement. It is important to understand the experience of female combatants in terms of physical, economic and cultural violence. Disempowered during times of peace and in the time of conflict, female ex-combatants are even more disadvantaged and less able to assert their rights. War magnifies the already existing gender inequalities that exist during times of peace and should not be envisaged as a return to the status quo. A just peace involves the reworking of the gender status quo. Therefore, there is a need for female ex-combatants to be included at all stages of DDR. Their participation in DDR is an essential dimension to achieve equitable political representation. Christine Chinkin states that "there is no peace agreement that provides an overall model for appropriate provisions for ensuring that the needs of women within the conflict zone are

[17] UN Resolution 1325, October 31 2000

[18] Jaqueline Stevens. "Reproducing the State." Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1999. p 213

served alongside those of the men[19]". She elucidates that "typically peace agreements are framed in gender-neutral language", with the assumption that the contents are "equally applicable to, and equally appropriate for, the needs of both women and men[20]". The DDR of female ex-combatants is necessary not only because it should formally recognize the images of female ex-combatants as victims of war but also because its success is critical to enabling female ex-combatants to make a contribution to the rebuilding of countries emerging from armed conflicts, and to realize social justice. Furthermore, failure to include women in all steps of peace processes exacerbates gendered subordination and overlooks women's capacities to "broker agreements in their own neighbourhoods[21]". Therefore, DDR of female ex-combatants in all peace building and post-conflict reconstruction is fundamental.

Secondly, the study wants to shed light on how the DDR process influences the reconfiguration of gender roles and positions in the wake of conflict, and how female ex-combatants are shaped by the process of erecting post-war social structures. When they are present, women bring "an understanding of the root causes of conflict" and they focus on "practical issues related to quality of life and human security[22]". The Sierra Leone case study provides a good example of how female combatants affected by war disarm, demobilize and reintegrate into their communities. The DDR process is important as the failure to disarm and demobilize female ex-combatants effectively may contribute to new social tensions and to different struggles over identity and status that are so distinctive for societies which have recently achieved peace. A study of DDR following insurgent conflict in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa concluded that "the governments that had failed to properly reintegrate ex-combatants later found themselves with a price to pay, as restive ex-fighters threatened

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[19] Chinkin Christine 'Peace Agreements as a Means for Promoting Gender Equality and Ensuring Participation of Women', UN Division of the Advancement of Women Expert Group Meeting, 10–13 November 2003, EGM/PEACE/2003/BP.1, 31 October 2003 p 2

[20] *Ibid.* pp 2, 9

[21] Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa, Women Waging Peace, Foreign Policy Magazine May/June, 2001, p 2

[22] Anderlini Sanam Naraghi and Stanski, Victoria, 'Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Reconstruction' in International Alert and Women Waging Peace, Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action, London: International Alert and Washington DC: Women Waging Peace. 2004 p25

national stability[23]". The UN states that "in the medium and long term, incomplete or ineffective reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society may lead to armed criminality by those former combatants who have no other means of earning a living[24]". As noted by David Keen "The failure to fulfil expectations of demobilized combatants jeopardized security and contributed to the high crime rates"[25]. Indeed, while disarmament and demobilization can be problematic, it is most certainly the reintegration process which determines the sustainability of the entire process and of the peace in general. This emphasises that for the DDR process to be sustainable, it needs to take into an account effective process as poverty, exclusion, inequality, lack of empowerment, in society at large indeed increases the risk for a country to revert into war. As Kees Kingma and Vanesa Sayers claim,

> It should be considered. . .that the long-term costs for society are even larger if they are not able to reintegrate into civilian life. Failure to support the reintegration process effectively may lead to increasing unemployment and social deprivation, which could lead to increasing crime rates and political instability[26].

In addition, the DDR of female ex-combatants are the most important aspects of peace building as a social process and women need peace for development as well as men. To leave female ex-combatants behind in such a crucial moment is not only to violate their right to participate but also to undermine the very objectives of DDR: sustainable and equitable development. The resultant damage is significant and permanent to a nation's political, social and economic sectors as women are the backbone of development of any nation. It is, therefore, essential for the peace process to prepare and ensure that adaption measures ad policies are built in to their existing national and sector development activities.

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[23] Dzinesa G. A. 'Swords into Ploughshares: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa", Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper 120, January 2006 p 9

[24] Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration: Principle and Guideline United Nations, December 1999 p16

[25] Keen David "War and peace: what is the difference?" in. Managing Armed Conflicts in the XXI Century, Ed. Adekeye Adebajo and Chandra Lekha Sriram, International Peace Academy, New York, Franck Cass 2001p 16

[26] Kingma Kees and Sayers, Vanessa: Demobilization in the Horn of Africa. Proceedings of the IRG workshop, Addis Ababa, December 1994. Brief 4. Bonn: BICC. 1995 p 12

Moreover, it's important that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved without urgent and radical steps to improve the rights and status of women and girls since gender inequality and discrimination against women hinders economic growth, sustainable development, peace and human rights. Women carry the brunt of poverty. This is why gender equality is important for achieving all of the MDGs.

The DDR process envisaged by the Lomé Peace Accord was aimed at adult combatants, but it was agreed by all parties (government of Sierra Leone and rebel forces - RUF) that female combatants have many different experiences of war. Despite this agreement, however, the reality was that the process tended to be 'one size fits all[27]. There were many female combatants in Sierra Leone who were under eighteen years of age and were considered child combatants. Child combatants constituted half of RUF the fighting forces: actually up to one third of these were girls[28]. Therefore, they had to be involved practically in the DDR as a way to protect them. Instead, female ex-combatants were not seen as real combatants and have received less attention in terms of analysis and resources from the DDR process[29]. In spite of existing knowledge of the low participation of female ex-combatants, the DDR process has led to some questions on the design, implementation and success of the DDR in Sierra Leone. Jo Ann Ticker, acknowledged gender presumptions and showed how the study of war, peace, development and others would change if we took women's perspectives into consideration[30].

The UNSR 1325 report suggests that peace processes can be strengthened by contributions from women's groups and the equal representation of women in all aspects of peace-building such as DDR. Women's inclusion in DDR is necessary to realize social justice. In coming to the negotiating table, there is a symbolic input of having a voice in establishing the foundations of a reconstructed society based on equality, rights and justice and suggesting what this means for different groups. Peace that "is supported and consolidated at the

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[27] Susan Shepler, Les Filles-Soldats: Trajectoires d'apres-guerre en Sierra Leone." Politique Africaine No. 88 December 2002 p 10

[28] Mazurana and McKay Where are the Girls, p 92

[29] International Peace Academy, Post-Conflict Peace building Revisited :Achievements, Limitations, Challenges, Tschirgi, N., New York: International Peace Academy, www.ipacademy.org/pdfs/POST_CONFLICT_PEACEBUILDING.pdf, 2004 accessed 17th July 2008

[30] Jo Ann Tickner. Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001 p 58

grassroots level" is more likely to be sustained than one negotiated among elites[31]. Furthermore, it is important to develop an understanding of the different and unequal impact of conflict and post-conflict situations on women and men. This thesis proposes that the needs for men and women should be addressed equally. It stresses the advantages of equal opportunity for both men and women as it promotes positive peace. The study aims to tackle entrenched violent and aggressive behaviour which is rooted in forms of masculinity. It argues that working with women as change agents in society improves the conditions of women and has positive outcomes for peace building in general. Although women served alongside men as combatants, because of women's subordinate status in many countries they may have difficulties in accessing the benefits from DDR processes. Hence the challenge is to render visible all of the so-called invisible combatants and to seek understanding of their experiences as human beings, rather than objectified stereotypes[32].

While it is important that the inclusion of female ex-combatants be considered as fundamental to the successful implementation of DDR, cases of their invisibility abound. As mentioned elsewhere in this study, inclusion has not been prioritised in most post-conflict policies, legislation or institutions at both national and international levels. The situation of female ex-combatants is aggravated by possible stigmatization by communities due to the fact female ex-combatants were part of the forces that inflicted destruction on the communities. Some communities also negatively perceive female ex-combatants as having played non-traditional roles by enlisting. The circumstances are even direr for those who return with fatherless kids, pregnancies or even diseases. Communities normally exclude female ex-combatants like these from integration. There is therefore a need to examine cases like Sierra Leone for particular DDR provisions that take into account the vulnerabilities and capacities relating to female combatants.

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[31] Karam Azza , 'Women in War and Peace building' in International Feminist Journal of Politics, Vol. 3 No 1, April 2001, p12

[32] Brett Rachel and McCallin, Margaret, Children: The Invisible Soldiers, Stockholm: Radda Barnen, 1998 p 7

Objectives of the study:

The specific objective of this thesis is to:

- Assess the design, implementation and impact of the DDR of female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone.

Research Questions

The thesis posts a number of questions that include:

a) What did the Lomé Accord say about the DDR of female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone? Were women involved in the negotiation of the Accord?
b) Was a gender-sensitive DDR policy and implementation strategy designed for Sierra Leone? Is a gendered participatory approach to the implementation of DDR associated with greater success in ensuring sustainable reintegration of female ex-combatants?
c) What are the challenges that hamper efforts to protect female ex-combatants during the process?
d) What lessons can Africa learn from the DDR of female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is that a participatory approach, involving all relevant stakeholders, particularly female ex-combatants, is a factor for effective implementation of DDR. Successful DDR of female ex-combatants is key to an effective transition from war to peace. The successful DDR process must be considered from the perspective of female ex-combatants because they will need to be implemented differently to reach female ex-combatants. The study argues on:

- On the assumption that the planning and implementation of a gender-sensitive DDR can be determined by the effective participation of women ex-combatants in the peace negotiation, crafting and implementation of DDR
- Further, it presupposes that the effective participation of female ex-combatants in the DDR process is determined by social and gender roles of women in Sierra Leone.

A Theoretical framework

The introduction of a gender perspective at the international and national level has led to a better understanding and appreciation of women's participation in armed conflict and subsequent peace negotiations, as well as their central role in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies. It is important to include gender related social differences and relations between men and women which are learned and transformed. The existing gender structure contains an unequal power relationship with male domination and female subordination in most spheres of life. In so doing, women's special needs are often overlooked[33].

Gender specific factors relating to behaviour and identity are important in any discussion, analysis, plan and policy that have a bearing on the peace sector. Thus, gender is a social construction which is important in planning any peace process. It also emphasizes how "these gendered constructions can help us to understand not only some of the causes of war but how certain ways of thinking about security have been legitimized at the expense of others[34]". It examines gender-specific impacts of conflict and post-conflict and the ways in which events in these contexts may affect women differently than they affect men. The specificity and diversity of women's experiences must be acknowledged. In certain cases, the return to peace may only amount to a return to a status quo where women are systematically excluded from structures of power, or where there are abuses of women's rights are sustained. The reality for many women around the world is that they are excluded from the very structures that make the decisions to sustain peace or engage in conflict. A gender perspective is employed as a research tool to analyse and interpret the identified research problems and to attain the aims of the study. The study of gender in conflict reveals that women and men have different experiences during and after conflict. Such gender-based differentiation in their experiences means that their needs are different and often gender-specific. As these differences are relevant in the design and implementation of DDR process, the thesis therefore argues that gender-specific challenges should be taken into account in the design and implementation of the DDR process.

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[33] UNIFEM, Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the Development of Guidelines for the Integration of Gender Perspectives into United Nations Human Rights Activities and Programmes 1995 p 13

[34] Jo Ann Tickner Op Cit. p 51

The gender perspective approach holds that gender equality must permeate the entire (peace) mission at all levels, thus ensuring the participation of women and men as equal partners and beneficiaries in at all aspects of the peace process. The gender perspective is therefore important to analyse this research. In other words, gender is used as lenses not only to show where women are during war and post-conflict, but where women are tells us about the structure of war and the peace process. With a gender perspective, the main viewpoint of the study is that the effective DDR of female ex-combatants is essential for society to run smoothly and harmoniously. While special attention is given to women throughout the publication so as to make visible the previously invisible, the aim has been to see women's situations within a gender framework which pays attention to how gender roles and relationships are continuously constructed and contested by different actors, and which recognizes the gender dimension inherent in all aspects of post-war reconstruction.

The framework of DDR understands that political, economic, cultural and social issues along with concerns for female ex-combatants must be addressed in post-conflict situations to assure future peace and stability. Women often face gender-specific constraints to accessing benefits provided by the DDR process. The process is problematic in that, firstly in that it perpetuates gender stereotyping, unfairly bypassing women ex-combatants and other women who supported war activities. Second, it short-changes economic growth by missing opportunities to involve productive women in reconstruction. A central problem is the lack of an accepted or commonly used definition of "female combatant" and who qualifies to participate in the process. DDR initiatives must better account for the political, social, and economic contexts of home communities, and better efforts must be made to address the particular needs of female ex-combatants. Angela Veale asserts that:

> Women having certain 'add-on' special needs in demobilization and reintegration assume the challenges facing men and women are the same, but with areas of special needs such as gynaecological health. The issues may be more fundamental and merit further analysis in demobilization processing[35].

The study of Women and DDR addresses this lacuna by looking at how post-war reconstruction relates to the reconfiguration of gender roles and positions in the wake of war.

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[35] Veale A., Op Cit p 36

This perspective allows us to identify emerging tensions and synergetic forces which support women in general. The gender perspective is also relevant for the achievement of sustainable peace. Per se, this thesis aims to contribute to a more dynamic understanding of female ex-combatants' situations in post-war societies and to a better understanding of the contexts that shape the outcomes of interventions. As the analysis strongly suggests, the failure to recognize gender issues may produce new social tensions and contribute to the differentiating struggles over identity, status and power that are so distinctive for societies which have recently achieved peace.

This thesis covers a broad field comprising cultural theory, gender studies, feminism and cultural politics to analyze the DDR of female ex-combatants. It examines the complex relationships within DDR with an emphasis on female ex-combatants, as they have specific perspectives and experiences. Failures to address female ex-combatants perspectives in peace-building operations not only leads to the exclusion of women and girls and neglect of their concerns, but also compromises the efficacy of such initiatives of peace operations and raise concerns about the implications of this neglect on long-term social reconstruction especially the goal of the process. To ignore the needs of female ex-combatants, whether in the form of decision-making or in action, denies them the right to actively participate and be accounted for in the key realms of human security, development, and reconstruction efforts which could have a profound impact on social stability. It is, therefore, important to recognize women's victimization in war and the other gender experiences in planning post-conflict response. Thus, the research cannot be based on empirical evidence from past processes. Instead it must combine previous research on gender issues within the DDR in order to make inferences about the issues that a combined process might come across.

Various authors have pointed out that women in Africa, as elsewhere, are subjected to multiple forms of oppressions. Marjorie Jobson maintains that "war in any country impacts heavily and very negatively on the women[36]". This lends credence to arguments to develop gender-sensitive post-conflict programs for sustainable peace and forms the basis for the

[36] Jobson M. 'In Peace Tables: Women Taking their Place at the Peace Table: The Inter-Congolese Peace Dialogue' in African women for Peace: Gender Justice in Post- Conflict Countries in East, Central and Southern Africa. Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria 2005 p 14

inclusion of the women's perspective in the peace process. Until the 1990s, the study of gender in peace studies remained largely on the margins. The disproportionate impact of war on civilian women has become an issue of great importance in global politics[37]. This is somewhat surprising given the considerable interdisciplinary reach of peace studies that encompasses many different levels of analysis, ranging from inner peace and spanning inter-personal, inter-group, international and global processes. Several theoretical approaches have been followed to study the phenomenon of gender in DDR process. For instance, Noeleen Heyzer distinguishes three trends regarding gender in DDR processes. Heyzer claims that:

> DDR processes tend to target mainly male combatants. She highlights that in DDR processes the alleged civil groups (e.g. women who were abducted and served as 'wives') are not recognized and, that the special needs of (female) dependants of (male) combatants are often not included in the different phases of DDR processes[38].

In addition, in 2000 more specific norms were developed applying to peacekeeping operations. On 31 May 2000, the Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming stated that "the principles of gender equality must permeate the entire (peace) mission, at all levels, thus ensuring the participation of women and men as equal partners and beneficiaries in all aspects of the peace process[39]". Despite these laudable goals, however, the expertise and perspectives brought to bear on the work has not adequately reflected gender considerations or women's perspectives.

While men, women and children are all affected by war trauma, violence and radical insecurity, there are gender-specific experiences of conflict such as war-rape and battery, exclusion from participation in peace-building and differing interpretations of what is necessary to further security. As Amnesty International affirm: "When political tensions degenerate into outright conflict, all forms of violence increase, including rape and other

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[37] Rehn Elizabeth and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Op Cit.

[38] Heyzer Noeleen, Gender, peace and disarmament. In Vignard, K. & V. Compagnion, (eds), Women, men, peace and security. Disarmament Forum. Vol. 4, Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.2003 p 9

[39] Windhoek Declaration: On the 10th Anniversary of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) The Namibia Plan of Action on 'Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations' May 2000

forms of sexual violence against women[40]". However, women do not simply represent passive victims. Women have played active roles both as combatants and commanders as well as being a driving force for peace, reconstruction and reconciliation. Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of mainstreaming gender into work on peace and security women remain to a large degree invisible. This invisibility manifests itself in the exclusion from high level peace-negotiations DDR initiatives, and post-conflict power structures. Feminist theorists query, "is it thinkable that the post war moment be used as an opportunity to turn a society towards gender equality as part of the lasting peace process [41]". Women in many different cultures understand their peace building activities as being "intertwined with issues of gender justice, demilitarization, the promotion of non-violence, reconciliation, the rebuilding of relationships, gender equality, women's human rights, the building of and participation in democratic institutions, and sustaining the environment[42]".

Global attention on gender considerations in the context of peace and security has come along way, particularly in Africa where peace is torn by these armed conflicts with women as the most vulnerable and the sufferers. For instance, Cynthia Enloe posits that gender neutral discourse may conceal that the post-war period is crowded with gendered decisions[43]". Women contributions during conflict are hardly recognized and women are excluded from humanitarian projects as well as formal post-conflict processes as they are viewed as one group of 'victims' rather than actors. The 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action) was a milestone for thrusting women to the forefront of peace activities. While the Beijing Platform did not explicitly mention DDR, it did call on the international community to better address women's needs in conflict and post-conflict settings and for their inclusion in conflict resolution at decision-making levels[44]. This conference provided a platform for deliberations on the role

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[40] Amnesty International, Report: 'Responsibilities Have no Borders' 2005 http://t2web.amnesty.r3h.net/report2005/intro-index-eng, accessed 18th October, 2008

[41] Cockburn C. & D. Zarkov (eds) The Postwar Moment. Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping, London: Lawrence & Wishart 2002 p 11

[42] McKay Susan and Mazurana, Dyan Raising Women's Voices for Peace building: Vision, Impact, and Limitations of Media Technologies, London: International Alert p 75

[43] Enloe Cynthia, The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War, Berkeley, University of California Press. 1993 p 261

[44] Reem Bahdi, "Security Council Resolution 1325: Practice and Prospects," Refuge 21, No. 2 2003 p 41

of women at two levels. First, it followed up on concerns about increasing decision-making roles of women in conflict resolution. Secondly, the conference specifically called for including ". . . a gender perspective in the resolution of armed and other conflicts . . . to ensure that bodies are able to address gender issues properly[45]".

Women experiencing the effects of war and conflict appear to have little in common, given their differences in history, culture, tradition, governance and causes of conflict. This was a watershed political framework that emphasised a gender perspective and the pursuit of gender equality in all aspects of peace-building. When male and female ex-combatants return to civil society, they are not received in the same way. While men are perceived to have strengthened their gender role through military life and are considered even more masculine than before, female fighters are increasingly marginalized. This is due to the fact that they are not present during peace negotiations when parameters for DDR are set. When a war ends, the female combatants from the winning party of the conflict may at first receive gratitude from civil society. Gradually, during post-conflict, women are pushed in the direction of a traditional gender role considered more acceptable in the society. This is the typical situation of female combatants all over the world that conduct encouraged during the war is not encouraged in peacetime[46]. As a result women experience a much greater split with civil society's expectations with regard to appropriate gender behaviour than men when they join a military group. Later, they are challenged in a totally different way and expected to return to play very different roles from their war activities. This certainly has implications for their reintegration into society. In many cases, it has been found that women and men have unequal access to resources following conflict.

Given existing gender biases and inequalities in most societies, men are often in a better position to take advantage of reconstruction (DDR processes) initiatives, whereas women's low status in most societies means that they suffer from inequality and the profound effects of patriarchy. Despite the world's diversity, common elements of gender bias still exist across cultures too. The idea of privileging girls' and women's in human security over boys' and men's seems inaccessible and even implausible. Females are especially vulnerable because of

[45] The 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, p 61
[46] Cynthia Enloe, The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War

conflict and poor socio-economic backgrounds. In many situations, women involved in war are less likely to accept a return to traditional domestic roles due to stereotypes that make DDR processes in Africa ignore women who actively participate in war.

Furthermore, feminist thinkers like Cynthia Enloe and Cynthia Cockburn have analysed how a militarization of societies affects masculinity and femininity as well as changes gender relations in peacetime[47]. According to Enloe, it is not men who are the problem, but rather the logical connection between patriarchy and militarism[48]. Thus the view that women are inherently more peaceful than men and are therefore morally superior serves to reinforce gender stereotypes and rigid sex roles. Again as armed conflict is so often associated with these generalized images of masculinity and femininity from this perspective, armed conflict remains an exclusively male concern and women are seen only as victims and are therefore denied agency[49]. As Jo Ann Tickner[50] noted, war is a time when gender polarization sets in. The differences between male and female social characteristics become more emphasized. Many studies have documented that after conflict women are under pressure to (re)submit to often oppressive gender roles in post-conflict societies[51]. The main point of scholarly discussion seems to be the degree to which more equality during a conflict was in fact achieved, and whether this achievement is irreversible.

Joshua Goldstein reiterates the influence of gender on war that "Gender shapes war and war shapes gender[52]". The connection between gender and war is found in the enormous, and there are variations across time and space and different cultures and societies. Similarly,

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[47] *ibid* p 250; Cynthia Cockburn "Gender Armed Conflict and Political Violence? Paper presented at a Workshop on Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence, The World Bank, Washington DC 1999 p 2

[48] Cynthia Enloe, The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War

[49] Elshtain Jean Bethke, Women and War, London: Harvester Press 1987 Chapter 2 and Chapter 6: Ferris, Elisabeth: Women, War, and Peace. Research Report No.14, Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala 1993, p 11

[50] Tickner J. A., Gender in international relations. New York: Columbia University Press. 1992 pp 47-48

[51] Farr V. Op Cit. 2002 p15

[52] Joshua S. Goldstein, War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa, Cambridge University Press, September 2001 p 1

Dorothea Hilhorst and Georg Frerks[53] add a constructivist dimension that gender differences are context-specific and determined by each situation. But attention to aspects of human security in international politics has also facilitated seeing the subject in a gender perspective. Armed conflict and post-conflict times affects women and men differently hence each peace-building presents specific dynamics. For D'Amico Francine war is masculine affair with women being relegated to play the role of spectators, victims or prize[54]". Accordingly, Jodi York attributes this construction to the perception of man's "natural" qualities of courage, chivalry, and strength in comparison to women's "natural" virtues of compassion, cooperation, and nurturing[55].

A 1994 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report noted: "In no society are women secure or treated equally to men. Personal insecurity shadows them from cradle to grave…and from childhood through adulthood they are abused because of their gender[56]". The United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) stressed that gender inequality is key to the continuing scale of violence against women; it is critical to their (in)security and it's tied to global security. Women are intensely aware that these threats affect their security and want changes that prevent and decrease violence in their lives[57]. Physical and sexual violence towards women occurs frequently during and after armed conflict. Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Sirleaf posit that "violence against women in conflict is one of history's great silences"[58]. Lack of recognition or enforcement prevents any real progress towards gender equality. The inequality that women experience during and after armed conflict in all societies derives from dominant understandings of gender roles.

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[53] Hilhorst D., and G. Frerks, Local Capacities for Peace: Concepts, Possibilities and Constraints. Paper presented at a seminar on Local Capacities for Peace, organized by Pax Christi, Interchurch Peace Council (IKV) and Disaster Studies Wageningen, Utrecht, September 1999 p 11-14

[54] Francine D'Amico. "Feminist Perspectives on Women Warriors." in The Women and War Reader by Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer E. Turpin. New York: New York University Press. 1998. p 119

[55] York Jodi, The Truth about Women and Peace. The Women and War Reader. Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (eds.) New York: New York University Press. Chapter two pp 19-25:Tina Johnson in Caprioli, Mark A. Boyer/Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 45, No. 4 Aug 2001 pp 503-518

[56] United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p 1

[57] UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Not a Minute More: Ending Violence against Women New York: United Nations, 2003 pp 64-65

[58] Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen J. Sirleaf, Op Cit. p 11-14

Research on gender perspectives of DDR has long been an important subject in contemporary armed conflict studies. Feminists feel that decisions being made on DDR processes are made from a male perspective. They would like to increase opportunities for women to have a collective say and influence in the DDR process. It is argued by some scholars such as Cockburn[59]; Judy El-Bushra [60] and Ruth Jacobson [61] that the use of gender analysis is useful to see gender roles, identities, and relations rather than focusing on 'impact of conflict on women' or 'women's issues'. Gender analysis of conflict stresses unequal gender power relations and the struggle over power and resources[62]. McKay and Mazurana pick up on the theme of peace-building and argue for "gender-aware and women-empowering political, social, economic, and human rights". Feminist ideology is asserted and the centrality of gender equity in the peace-building process is emphasized. McKay and Mazurana's critique of dominant discourses extends to peace psychology, arguing that the field is patriarchal gender biased or male dominated, as exemplified by the largely invisible and marginalized contributions of women to peace building[63]. Consistent with feminist views, they offer a critical analysis of the narrow conception of peace, as the absence of war, and note that women's peace building efforts extend to the social justice arena. They define women's peace building broadly, as activities that contribute to a "culture of peace[64]". Gender identities and gender relations are essential facets of culture as they determine the way daily life is lived not only within the family, but also in society as a whole. The feminist perspective on peace makes connections between systems of patriarchy within the family and society, and violence. Thus, gender as a category and also in terms of women as peace actors has remained mostly invisible and silent within the mainstream literatures of both the peace studies fields. Processes and policies such as DDR that lack consideration of gender relations are likely to reinforce existing gender inequality. In recognition of the above, the UN and

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[59] Cockburn C. "The Gendered Dynamics of Armed Conflict and Political Violence". In: C.O.N. Moser and F.C. Clark. (ed). Victims, Perpetrators or Actors?: Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence. London and New York: Zed Books 2001 pp 13-29

[60] El-Bushra Judy. "Fused in combat: gender relations and armed conflict". Development in Practice. Vol. 13 No. 2 & 3, 2003 pp 252-265

[61] Jacobson Ruth. "Complicating 'complexity': integrating gender into the analysis of the Mozambican conflict". Third World Quarterly. Vol. 20, No. 1, 1999, pp 175-187

[62] Byrne Bridget. "Towards a Gendered Understanding of Conflict". IDS Bulletin. Vol. 27, pp 331-40: Kabeer N., 'Agency, well being and inequality', IDS Bulletin, Vol. 27 No 1, Brighton: the Institute of Development Studies 1996 p 32

[63] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls?

[64] *ibid*

other agencies involved in DDR have started incorporating gender analysis in their policies and programs, especially since 2000 when the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on women, peace and security[65]. Yet, there has been little comprehensive analysis of gender and war as it was seen in Sierra Leone. UN SCR 1325 does seem to recognize women's importance. Likewise Caspar Fithen and Paul Richards, in there reference to war and post-war Sierra Leone, state that "no one really knows what happened to rebel women after the war and that there are major gaps in information on the reintegration of female ex-combatants and ''bush wives[66]'' Women and girls involved in the fighting forces were not properly informed about who was eligible for the DDR process. As a result, some women today still believe that the process was just for male rebels and not for "their wives" or for the female combatants. In this case, it was not that women and girls were 'left behind;' rather, women and girls were not given adequate information about the process to consider it as an option.

Gender equality is not simply a collectively accepted ideal either. It is a totally political concept that goes to the very heart of culture and nationalism in any country. Culture and nationalism being unique, the understanding of gender in each society will be tied to aspects of culture found in particular contexts. Women are both agents and victims and also form a fundamental part of a national image, through their productive and reproductive labor. As Yuvak Davis points out, the more primitive the rendering of people and nation, the more the relations between men and women are essentialized[67]. It has been argued by many feminist theorists that women are by nature and nurture more pacific. Thus society has undeniably created defined gender roles and in times of post-conflict, gender-specific persona tends to be enlarged. Women are reminiscent that by biology and by tradition they are the keepers of heart and home, to nurture and teach children. Men by physique and tradition are there to protect women and children, and the nation, often also represented as "the motherland"[68]. Women are also often seen as the symbols of culture, of earth and nationhood and as

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[65] United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) http://www.WomenWarPeace.org, accessed 12th October 2008

[66] Fithen C. & P. Richards, Making War, Crafting Peace: Militia Solidarities and Demobilization in Sierra Leone." In P. Richards, (ed.), No peace, No War: An Anthropology of contemporary Armed Conflicts, Oxford: Currey, 2005 p133

[67] Nira Yuval-Davis, "Theorizing Gender and Nation, Gender and Nation; London Sage Publications Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi 1997 p 1-25

[68] *Loc Cit.*

reproducers of both people and culture; women occupy not just a symbolically but also practically essential position in any nation or state. Any outside attempt to change the gender status quo is therefore seen as political. These social and local realities need to be understood and addressed when attempting peace-building work. Yakin Erturk divulges that:

> effects of conflict on gender roles and relation on women shows that the consequences of conflict are contradictory, offering opportunities for rupturing patriarch through women's self awareness, empowerment and liberation, while at the same time, reinforcing patriarchy through greater subordination of women[69].

Despite the appeals found in UNSCR 1325, the reality is their needs are often not addressed in the initial DDR process, leaving them vulnerable. Hence, there is still much work to do to make engendering peace a reality[70]. Thus if women were acknowledged to be more peaceful and nurturing both supports and reproduces patriarchal values in war as well as in peace, these were the very qualities that nations and governments needed to create a more peaceful existence for their citizens. Caroline Moser' argues "that recognising gendered impacts of violence against women in conflict situations along a continuum of violence has remained a more recent subject for detailed international critical analysis[71]".

Therefore, the moment is right to assess ways in which gender mainstreaming can be further incorporated into the DDR process. It is those who set out to define and understand the gender dimension in conflict that hold out a promise to women across the globe that their rights will be protected and that barriers to equal participation and full involvement in the maintenance and promotion of sustainable peace will be removed.

The various contributions in this section clearly demonstrate the inherent complexities of DDR on female ex-combatants using gender perspectives and also highlight how these issues affect our understanding of peace and conflict. The above authors have shown that awareness

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[69] Yakin Erturk, "From the Cold War to the Hot Peace",1997 in INSTRWA: Women and Human Settlements in the Conflict Zone, Proceedings from a Round Table at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, Turkey,1996, p 27

[70] UN Security Council, Resolution on Women and Peace and Security, S/RES/2000/1325 October 31, 2000

[71] Moser C 'The Gendered Continuum of Violence and Conflict: An Operational Framework', in Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence; London Zed Press.2001 pp 30-52

that gender differences can be an avenue for identifying new ways of thinking and dealing with questions of conflicts, politics and peace. Vanessa Farr suggests that the lack of gender awareness in DDR stems from the lack of women's substantive engagement in the peace negotiations that establish the framework for DDR[72]. Similarly MacKay says "all these efforts in a gender perspective on human security are part of efforts to reduce direct and structural violence that women face and to create a safe condition for women life[73]". What we do claim is that analyses of peace and conflict which do not include gender reflections are simply incomplete. The contributions in this research should be taken as examples of how to make studies of peace and conflict more comprehensive.

Conceptual Framework

In the study, different key concepts on the DDR of female ex-combatants are defined, examined and adopted to assert their relevance and also their applicability to the study.

Definitions

The accepted definition of DDR within the UN system was produced by the UN Secretary General in 2005, and adopted by the General Assembly, and reiterated since then as: The **DDR** definition[74]. Three basic phases are distinguished in the transition from being a member of an armed group to a civilian: disarmament (removing the weapons), demobilization (discharging combatants from their units) and reintegration (the socio-economic process of becoming a civilian).

Phases of DDR

Disarmament is the removal and destruction of small arms, light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone, including their safe storage and sometimes their destruction. Potential targets for disarmament include: government force, civil defence forces, irregular armed groups and

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[72] Farr V. "Paper 20: Gendering Demilitarization as a Peace building Tool," p 16

[73] Mazurana, Dyan. Women in Armed Opposition Groups speak on War, Protection and Obligations under 2. International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law. Report of a workshop organised by Geneva Call and the programme for the Study of International Organization(s). 2004 p 152

[74] United Nations (UN), Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-combatants in a Peace-keeping Environment. New York: United Nations Dept. of Peacekeeping Operations 1999, p 15

armed individuals. The UN agencies involved in this process are the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA)[75] and the UN Department of Peacekeeping (DPKO)[76].

Demobilization is a process by which parties to a conflict begin to disband their military structures and combatants begin the transformation into civilian life. It generally entails registration of former combatants; some kind of assistance to enable them to meet their immediate basic needs; discharge, and transportation to their home communities.

The DDR process contributes to the security, stability and the return to normalcy so that recovery and development can begin for sustainable growth and poverty reduction. The objective is to enhance the prospects for stabilization and recovery spheres. DDR are activities designed to facilitate disbanding military fighters and to ease their transition back into society hence deal with the post-conflict security problem that would result from ex-combatants being left without livelihoods or support networks, other than their former comrades, during the critical transition period from conflict to peace and development[77]. No peace process can be successful when armed groups exist that pose a threat to fragile peace efforts[78]. The short-term goal is the restoration of security and stability through the disarmament of warring groups and their demobilisation. The long-term goal is the sustained social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants into a peaceful society[79].

Reintegration is defined here as the procedure by which ex-combatants attain civilian status. The elements of reintegration include family reunification (or finding alternative care if reunification is impossible), providing education and training, devising appropriate strategies for economic and livelihood support and in some cases providing psycho-social support.

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[75] Advocacy for small arms collection and removal; advice on the design of weapons collection programmes which is the lead agency for peacekeeping operations, http://www.un.org/aboutun/mainbodies.htm, accessed 1st July 2008

[76] *Loc Cit.*

[77] The Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) Level 2: Concepts, Policy and Strategy of Integrated DRR, 2.10 The UN Approach to DDR, http://www.unddr.org/iddrs/02/, accessed 10th October, 2008

[78] Collier P. And S. Pradhan., Economic Aspects of the Uganda Transition to Peace, In Azam et al., 1994 p 120

[79] Boyce J.K., Adjustment towards Peace: An Introduction." World Development Vol. 23, No. 12 1995, p 2069

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a **child soldier** means[80]: any child, boy or girl under the age of eighteen who takes a direct part in hostilities (either voluntarily or compulsorily recruited) as a member of governmental armed forces serving in any capacity, including in support roles such as, but not limited to, cooks, porters, messengers, medics, guards, sex slaves, etc.

Gender refers to the different roles, attitudes, values and relationships regarding women and men that are constructed by various societies[81]. During conflict, women and men may have different roles, concerns and priorities.

A **Female combatant** is defined differently per country to allow flexibility with respect to local contexts. In this thesis, the term 'female combatant' broadly denotes women and girls who were active combatants in Sierra Leone's armed conflict, Female supporters/Females Associated with Armed Forces and Groups (FAAFG) and Female dependants of those associated with armed group. FAAFG and female dependants refers to women who would have had non-combatant roles such as persons working in logistics and administration, as well as individuals – especially women and girls – who have been abducted, voluntarily and sexually or otherwise abused and who have subsequently stayed with the group as bush wives, camp followers and sex slaves[82].

Peace building refers to formal post-conflict reconstruction. An Agenda for Peace' defines 'peace building' as "…action/interventions to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict[83]". It is the phase of

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[80] The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989, article 1. The definition used also by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (hereafter the African Charter) is consistent with that of the CRC, African Charter, 1990, article 22.

[81] Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the Development of Guidelines for the Integration of Gender Perspectives into United Nations Human Rights Activities and Programmes, U.N. ESCOR, Comm'n on Hum. Rts., 52d Sess., Agenda Items 9, 21, ¶ 13, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/1996/105 (1995) [hereinafter 1995 Report of the Expert Group Meeting]

[82] UN, "Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards," 5.10, pp 8-9: Bouta, T., G. Frerks and I. Bannon., Gender, Conflict and Development. Chapter 2, Gender and Warfare: Female Combatants and Soldiers' Wives. Washington DC: World Bank. 2005 pp 9-22: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)**,** Women, War, Peace and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)**,** http://www.womenwarpeace.org/node/4**,** accessed 15th November, 2008

[83] Boutros-Ghali, Op Cit. 1992 p 11

the peace process that takes place after peacemaking and peacekeeping[84] between groups that have been in conflict. Peace building involves several different aspects, which may include forgiveness, cooperation, negotiation, mediation, facilitation, creation of mutual understanding and/or reconciliation.

Post-conflict reconstruction is part of the long-term effort to maintain peace following a settlement and incorporates the process of DDR[85].

Case Selection and justification

Sierra Leone was taken as a particular case study as it presents an appropriate contemporary case to examine the design and implementation of DDR of female ex-combatants in which international institutions such as the UN and World Bank were involved. The selection of Sierra Leone as the focus of this study stems from the following:

- Its sizeable population of female ex-combatants
- The Lomé Peace Accord's recognition of the need to prioritize the DDR of the female ex-combatants.
- It's a case study to test UNSCR 1325 and its provisions for mainstreaming gender in peace building/DDR. Examine DDR within multidimensional UN peace keeping - UNAMSIL
- To show how specific political, social, economic and security organizational/institutional contexts affected the plan, implementation and outcome of DDR process
- The passage of time since the start of the Sierra Leone country's DDR process from 1998 to 2005 allows for analysis without falling into the trap of analyzing a moving target.

Sierra Leone qualifies for a case study, in view of the considerable proliferation of violent conflict and the various attempts at transition (including DDR) in the region. This enables us

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[84] *ibid* p 57
[85] Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/0/631060B93EC1119EC1256D120043E600?Open Document, accessed 8th August 2008

to look at the DDR process of ex-combatants that was seen as a necessary condition for sustainable development and stability and might result in useful lessons learned. Sierra Leone illustrates the main challenges that are encountered during the DDR of female ex-combatants. One of the major issues is the complex involvement of women in armed conflict. Female ex-combatants were recruited for sexual purposes and forced into marriage, in addition to their participation in fighting. It is estimated that during the conflict women made seventy per cent and girl combatants made up to thirty percent[86]. This study will refer to female ex-combatants as female adult combatants and 'girl combatant' as any female, under age of eighteen, who is part of an armed force or group. It was estimated that the number of women fighting in the various fighting forces was around twenty five per cent and the number of girls under eighteen around twelve per cent of total forces[87]. During the DDR process in Sierra Leone, female ex-combatants were invisible[88]. In a patriarchal society, their role as instigators of conflict, perpetrators of violence, victims of conflict and eligible for DDR process has received little attention from policy-makers. As female combatants are not directly regarded as a major security threat, they are insufficiently target by DDR process as it was in Sierra Leone. However, it is important to acknowledge the reasons why female ex-combatants have joined armed groups; some have been recruited by force or have volunteered. It is true to a great extent that the rights of female ex-combatants were considered, but not always met because they were excluded from many aspects of the process, registering them as 'dependants' and 'camp followers'[89]. During the DDR process, it was estimated that only six per cent of DDR participants were women and zero point six per cent girls despite an estimated twelve per cent of combatants were female[90]. It was also reported that from an estimated 12,000 girl fighters, only 500 were disarmed or had any access to reintegration

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[86] Breen Smyth, Marie, 'The Process of Demilitarisation and the Reversibility of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland', Terrorism and Political Violence, Vo1. 6 No. 3, Autumn 2004, pp544-566

[87] Mazurana Dyan and Khristopher Carlson, From Combat to Community: Women and Girls in Sierra Leone. Washington, DC: Women Waging Peace, 2004 p 3

[88] The Secretary-General's Study. Women, Peace and Security. United Nations. New York. 2002 http://www.un.org/apps/news/storyAr.asp?NewsID=3502&Cr=abuse&Cr1=sierra, accessed 11th November, 2008

[89] Machel Graca, Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children: Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, New York: United Nations. 1996 p 17

[90] Coulter, Chris, 'The Post-War Moment: Female Fighters in Sierra Leone', Working Paper 22, Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of Witwatersrand, November 2005 p 3

benefits[91]. This indicated that thousands more fighters, particularly women and girl combatants, were not reached by the official process[92].

Research Structure and Methodology

This paper is structured in two parts, embodying a theoretical and an empirical approach. The theoretical part serves to provide a gradual understanding of female ex-combatants in DDR, first by examining the role of DDR in post-conflict situations, then by analysing the applicability of female ex-combatants and other developmental contexts. This analysis is based on a literature review of secondary sources covering the subject areas of DDR process.

The empirical part, meanwhile, gauges selected theoretical and lessons learned from the desk review of relevant publications and articles in Sierra Leone. In selecting the DDR of female ex-combatants, the study chooses widely used and credible reports and studies produced either by the UN or other reputable and well recognized organization with experience in advocacy and process in these area. For this purpose, key institutions involved in the implementation of DDR processes were targeted, such as the UN (primary UNSCR 1325, UNIDDR, UNAMSL). Resolutions, declarations and statements were consulted to determine what international commitments have been made. Furthermore, various scholars were used to assist in providing the theoretical understandings that informed our analysis. In addition, internet research was used to gather specific information on UN, INGO, NGOs initiatives and working papers, evaluations and policy documents.

The main purpose of this research is to give a thorough review of the validity and reliability issues. To enhance the reliability of the qualitative research, careful examination is conducted to ensure the consistency of the process and the product of the research. This is achieved through literature reviews that were conducted from 1991 up to 2005. One of the major strengths of using case study research for this paper is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. The validity of the research, in spite of being a single-case, is underlined the in depth information and meanings viewed in relation to the recent history of violent conflict in Sierra Leone. The study has given greater weight to analyzing and comparing the

[91] Mazurana and Carlson, From Combat to Community, p 4-15
[92] *ibid*

collected sources against the existing literature. The research measured what it was supposed to measures, which is the eventual resilience of female ex-combatants.

The study utilized the qualitative case study method. Comprehensive desk (secondary sources) research on the DDR of female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone was carried out[93]. Given the breadth of the literature, it focuses narrowly on that which is most relevant to the current discussion. The diversity of sources enables a more comprehensive grasp of the political and socioeconomic factors affecting the female combatants of DDR process. Much of this literature is qualitatively focused, although there is some quantitative information available about the numbers of female ex-combatants who have participated in previous process. This literature was helpful to determine the history and evolution of DDR and what made female ex-combatants more accommodative to gender differences. Evidence about female ex-combatants' exclusion from DDR was sought from the qualitative literature. This is important because of the literary wealth of information that already exists about DDR as well as a lack of access to primary materials in the researcher's present location as regards DDR will provide sufficiently for this aim.

Qualitative data was sourced from The University of Witwatersrand Library, the South Africa Institute of International Affairs library (Jan Smut House Library) and the internet. The study uses the descriptive explorative design because it aims to explore and understand the effects of DDR on female ex-combatants and the challenges through vivid documented testimonies shared by female ex-combatants.

The latent aim of this study will be to offer an overview of the narrative of the work and directs the reader's attention to the key issues, creating a semblance of a coherence that progresses through an argument constructed to appear as an apt description. This will employ descriptive design because it is concerned with determining the relationship between two variables (dependent and independent) with specific predictions and narration of facts and characteristics concerning individuals, groups or situations[94]. In order to have the required

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[93]Qualitative psychological research, http://www.answers.com/topic/qualitative-psychological-research accessed 11 July 2008

[94] Kothari C.R. Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques. (2ed.), New Delhi: Vishwaprakashan, 1990

information for this study, two categories of informants were targeted; female adults combatants and girl combatants. The study focuses primarily on the activities in 1998 up to 2005. In 1998, the government and international communities' initiated efforts aimed at to investing in the DDR process, while 2005 was the official conclusion of the DDR process.

Literature Review

There is recognition that the response to this reality (women inclusion) must be better targeted if the DDR is to prevent violent conflict, promote gender equality, recognise women's rights and empower women more generally. There are therefore in fact, different perspectives on DDR, encompassing different objectives and levels of ambition drawing from various authors, which can be placed on a continuum and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This thesis draws on the case study report as well as a review of academic and policy literature that was completed in 2005.

Since the beginning of the DDR process, there have been various academic and policy oriented analysis of DDR concerning female ex-combatants. Many experiences, outcomes, shortcoming and lessons learned with regard to DDR processes have been documented, and responsive policy guidelines. A good example is the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS, UN 2006) – have been formulated. In addition, the adoption of UNSCR 1325 (2000) on "Women, Peace and Security," provided new momentum on the inclusion of gender perspectives in international peace and security work. The bulk of these efforts have focussed on the required context and the desired design of DDR as well as on specific issues and target groups. Other s studies include; Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana's "Where are the girls? Girls in fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique,"; Nathalie de Watteville's "Addressing Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programs,"; Vanessa A. Farr's "Gender-Aware DDR Checklist," and Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's "Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace building".

The research reveals that despite the extensive documentation from the lessons learned from the DDR process regarding the "special needs" of female ex-combatants. This section will

attempt to demonstrate the academic neglect of this important area of study, citing relevant literature according to context and period. Using Sierra Leone as a case study, the main aim of this thesis is to analyses the DDR process of female ex-combatants. Majority of the literature has taken a fairly narrow perspective; some consisting of case studies of particular missions and some of generalized lessons. For instance, many of the case studies identified shortcomings such as management problems (accountability) and at the end few insights have offered detailed theoretical knowledge about these problems. This section also provides open debate on the subject, from emanating universities and other research institutions, think tanks, as well as from the organizations involved in DDR and will highlight lessons learned and best practices in the DDR.

Academic and policy-oriented analysis of DDR has also grown in recent years. Many experiences, outcomes, shortcomings and lessons learned with regard to DDR have been documented. For instance, the UN's development fund for women, UNIFEM has a web portal specifically designated as a forum for the discussion and study of gender in DDR[95]. Additionally the feminist movement continues to generate literature on women's role in peace-building and the importance of including a gender perspective in the peace-building processes. As mentioned by MacKay, the feminist perspective attempts to analyze how women experience insecurity[96]. By using a feminist perspective, women are also seen as agents with their own aspirations and needs. The bulk of these efforts have focused on the required context and the desired design of DDR as well as on specific issues and target groups. Furthermore, there has been strong international involvement in and support for the DDR process in a wide range of different contexts.

UN has produced many documents, treaties and consensus agreements that mention and expand on the effect of war on women and the need for their involvement in conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. The UN supported the existing capacity of national and local actors to develop, manage and implement DDR. UN literature categorizes DDR of ex-combatants as a crucial continuum that is part of an entire peace

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[95] UNIFEM's framework for action on Women, Peace and Security www.womenwarpeace.org, accessed 19th November, 2008
[96] McKay Op Cit, p 155

process[97]. The Principles Guiding the UN[98] approach to DDR, as adopted by the General Assembly, encourage planners to facilitate participation by female ex-combatants, communities, and other stakeholders in the process. As early as 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali called for demobilization and reintegration efforts in Sierra Leone and a DDR process was written into the terms of the 1996 peace agreement[99].

This report sets out general practical guidelines and procedures on how to plan, implement, monitor and coordinate the various phases and components of a voluntary DDR process. Particular emphasis is placed on an integrated and coordinated approach to the development of a comprehensive DDR plan. Where appropriate, the principles and guidelines are supplemented by sample forms and generic outlines. In addition, the UN Secretary issued a report in 2000 "The Role of UN Peacekeeping Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration" which reiterates the importance of the DDR process in peace-building[100]. The report not only emphasized the DDR as the key in post-war stability that reduces the likelihood of conflicts recurring but also that special attention should be given to vulnerable groups, such as girls[101]. In 2000, the UN Security Council underlined in Resolution 1314, the importance of giving consideration to the special needs and particular vulnerabilities of girls affected by armed conflict, including prevention, disarmament and reintegration[102].

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[97] United Nations, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Peacekeeping Environment. Principles and Guidelines, New York, UNDPKO, 2000; Boutros-Boutros Ghali, An Agenda for Development, Report of the Secretary General, A/48/935 New York, United Nations, 1994; K. Anan, The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, (UNS/1998/318), 13 April 1998

[98] Ball Nicole and Luc van de Goor, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Mapping Issues, Dilemmas and Guiding Principles**,** Clingendael Institute, 2006-08-00, DDR_by_Netherlands_Institute_for_International_Affairs_-Aug_2006.pdf. accessed 2nd July 2008

[99] Agence France Press. Boutros-Ghali calls for democracy in Sierra Leone ahead of trip. November 24 1995

[100] United Nations, The Role of United Peacekeeping in Disarmament, Remobilization and Reintegration." Report of the Secretary General to the Security Council. S/2000/101. 11 February 2000 p 8

[101] Peters L. War is no Child's Play: Child Soldiers from Battlefield to Playground, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) , Geneva, Occasional Paper No. 8 July 2005 www.un.org/Docs/sc/reports/2000/sgrep00.htm, accessed 24th July 2008

[102] United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Resolution 1314, Article 13. Adopted by the Security Council at its 4185th meeting, on 11 August 2000 p 3

Yet again, the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on "The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa" reiterates the reintegration of ex-combatants and others into productive society as one of the priorities of post conflict peace building[103]. Furthermore, in 2000 "the Brahimi Report" named after the UN Under-Secretary General Lakhadar Brahimi on the reform of UN peacekeeping operations emphasized on the DDR process. This report wants the DDR process to be considered as the first phase of an operation aimed at reducing the likelihood of resumption of conflict and the rapid disassembly of fighting factions[104]. Confirming this trend, the Brahimi report underlined the importance of DDR and made specific recommendations about planning, financing and organising it[105]. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) released Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Peacekeeping Environment: Principles and Guidelines in 2000[106]. While recognizing that each conflict is unique, the document recognised the importance of addressing the needs of special target groups, including female, during the design and implementation of DDR process. In December 1999, DPKO developed also the DDR Principles and Guidelines that take gender issues into account; and the development of more gender-sensitive approaches to early warning efforts[107]. Likewise, the then Secretary-General of the UN Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali accented the same argument by emphasizing DDR process for peace building to be successful[108].

In 2001, the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA) produced Briefing Notes: Gender Perspectives on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. This emphasized the relationship between gender and disarmament[109]. The Briefing Notes called for recognition of the different experiences of women in conflict and for the construction of DDR processes "that respond to the actual (rather than assumed) needs of all

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[103] United Nations. "The causes of conflict and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa," Report of the UN Secretary-General. a/52/871-S/1998/3/318 New York: UN 1998 p 14
[104] Brahimi Lakhdar, 'Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations',
[105] *Loc Cit.*
[106] UNDPKO, "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Peacekeeping Environment: Principles and Guidelines," New York, UNDPKO 1999 p 51
[107] *Loc Cit.*
[108] Boutros-Ghali, Boutros, An Agenda for Peace p 32
[109] UNDDA, "Briefing Notes: Gender Perspectives on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)," 2001, p 1

those involved[110].” They also recognised females’ unequal ability to access DDR processes. To address these gender gaps, UNDDA recommended paying special attention to gender during process design and implementation with regard to eligibility, target group consultations, service provision, timeframe, local capacities and organizations, and the context of DDR.

Furthermore, following much scrutiny and revision, now the UN definition of combatants recognizes five categories of people who are eligible to participate in DDR processes: male and female adult combatants; children associated with armed forces and groups; those working in non-combat roles (including women); ex-combatants with disabilities and chronic illnesses; and dependants[111]. The UN’s original conception of DDR process was so centred on masculine ideas of conflict and armament that it provided easy fodder for feminist attack. A clear line runs through nearly all gender-focused DDR criticism, that in order for peace building to work, it must include more than just the male half of the population. In the 2006 “Integrated DDR Standards” (IDDRS), the UN explained and apologized for its earlier mistakes regarding women. Here the UN states:

> Ultimately, DDR should lead to a sustainable transition from military to civilian rule, and therefore from militarized to civilian structures in the society more broadly. Since women make up at least half the adult population, and in post-conflict situations may head up to seventy five percent of all households, the involvement of women in DDR is the most important factor in achieving effective and sustainable security[112]. A narrow definition of who qualifies as a ‘combatant’ came about because DDR focuses on neutralizing the most potentially dangerous members of a society (and because of limits imposed by the size of the DDR budget); but leaving women out of the process underestimates the extent to which sustainable peace-building and security require them to participate equally in social transformation[113].

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[110] UNDDA, "Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan," Geneva: United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, 2003, p 16
[111] UNIDDRS, 2.10 p 7
[112] *ibid*, 5.10 p 3
[113] *ibid*, 5.10 p 4

Since then DDR processes have now become inclusive of female combatants, at least in word if not in deed. The IDDRS demanded that all people associated with armed groups be included in the demobilisation and reintegration component of a DDR process. The IDDRS includes recognition of the category of women associated with fighting forces; ensures sustainable reintegration support to male and female ex-combatants and their dependants; and promotes the recruitment of a critical mass of women ex-combatants to restructured security service. The IDDRS is now very sensitive to gender in its programming, not only designating a chapter to "Women, Gender and DDR" but also discussing gender in every other chapter. It is clear that gender was not simply an afterthought in the re-writing of DDR policy, but a powerful force in the construction of program planning. IDDRS gender sensitivity can be taken as a culmination of a decade of writing on the issues of women and peace building, and the UN's ultimate acceptance that it must make gender as a primary concern, not simply an aside. Despite the attention that gender has received in the recent planning and implementation of DDR processes, the UN continues to face problems attracting female participants. Women fear the stigma attached to being a known combatant. This report will draw on the IDDRS to understand the gender-sensitivity of the current DDR process and the effectiveness of the updated standards in attracting female participants to the process. Hence the IDDRS will serve as a major source of information for this research about DDR and its current procedural methods.

In addition, the Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (SIDDR) has become a widely recognised subject and it drew in a wide range of actors in reviewing DDR operations with a view to improving funding modalities and strengthening political and financial support for peace building. The SIDDR on DDR recognizes, "the primary aim of DDR is to contribute to a secure and stable environment in which the overall peace process and transition can be sustained[114]". Addressing the needs of female ex-combatants is directly linked to opportunities to transform the security sector from conflict and contribution to longer term security and development SIDDR emphasises the importance of designing and implementing DDR process in a gender-sensitive way and it is cognizant of

[114] Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament Demobilisation Reintegration (SIDDR) (2006) 'Final Report', Stockholm: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/06/43/56/cf5d851b.pdf, accessed 14th July 2008 p 14

the difficulties that have been encountered with gender issues in DDR in the past. A security-focused understanding of DDR clearly calls for making sure that female combatants are adequately addressed through DDR processes, even if this means that specialised programmes must be created. Similarly, the SIDDR emphasises the importance of establishing parallel programmes for those categories of women, men and children associated with the armed groups but whom, not being ex-combatants or posing a security threat, will normally not qualify for reinsertion assistance.

In recent years, the UNSCR1325 on Women, Peace and Security marked a turning point in the recognition of the importance of women and gender in peace building activities. The resolution recognizes that women's visibility in domestic and international politics and organizations is crucial to creating balanced and successful programming[115]. It calls for gender-aware peacekeeping initiatives, especially in demobilization and reintegration. Women must have informed and active participation in disarmament exercises, and should be able to carry out their post-conflict reconstruction activities without the threat of violence, particularly sexual violence. In article 13, the resolution encourages "all those planning demobilization, disarmament and reintegration to consider the different needs of male and female combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents"[116]. UNSCR1325 came about after years of a groundswell campaigning by the international peace community. Drawing on feminist scholars, it proposes that understanding gender differences is essential to creating a sustainable peaceful environment. This report will also use UNSCR 1325 as a tool for analyzing the subsequent successes and failures in gendered peace-building process, and as a basis for understanding the gender-focused foundations of these programs. In addition, the report issued simultaneously by UNIFEM (2002) as another follow-up to Resolution 1325 exposes the grave inequalities and human rights violations that women continue to experience during war and post-conflict reconstruction despite documented gains. Furthermore, the DPKO has revised manuals on gender and DDR in partnership with UNIFEM. The UNDP is more systematically including women in weapons collection and development packages. UNICEF is more deliberately reaching out to girl combatants and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is increasingly invited into demobilization camps to provide

[115] United Nations. UN Security Council Resolution 1325
[116] *Loc Cit.*

health services, including psychosocial trauma counselling for women ex-combatants. Recognition of the gender-deficit and willingness to address it is the window of opportunity to replace ad hoc measures and one-off projects with routine consideration of the different needs and capacities of women and men. However, UNSCR 1325 has been criticized as a limited document because of its conceptual gaps, for the lack of guidelines in practical application and for the failure in implementation and one that perpetuates the conflation of "women" and "gender," despite its focus on gender mainstreaming in the context of peace building. While progress has occurred in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction arenas in terms of new policies, gender expertise and training initiatives, 'in no area of peace and security works are gender perspectives systematically incorporated in planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting'[117]. In many cases implementation of its mandate remains sporadic and ad hoc. Furthermore, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan then reiterated that in order to be successful, DDR initiatives must be based on a concrete understanding of which combatants are women, men, girls or boys[118].

Nevertheless, the lengthiest work was published by the UNIFEM on DDR "Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration" was in 2004. This has become a tool for planning and implementing DDR process that meets the standards of Resolution 1325. In her introduction, Noeleen Heyzer states the overall theme of the study: "To leave women and girls behind in such a crucial moment is not only to violate their right to participate but also to undermine the very objectives of DDR, namely sustainable and equitable development"[119]. UNIFEM has also published a checklist for gender in DDR, which asks questions about gender inclusive procedures at every level of the process.[120] Other scholars such as Sarah Douglas, Vanessa Far, Felicity Hill and Wenny Kasuma[121] present

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[117]UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) Women and Armed Conflict: New Challenges. Beijing at 10: Putting Policy into Practice. New York: UN Department of Public Information 2004a p 2

[118] Kofi Annan, Statement to Security Council on Women, Peace and Security, Press Release SG/SM/8461 SC/7551 WOM/1366 24 October 2000

[119]UNIFEM 'Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration', New York: October 2004 p 1

[120] UNIFEM "Gender-aware Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR): A Checklist".

[121] Douglas, S., Farr, V., Hill, F. and Kasuma, W., 'Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration', UNIFEM, New York, USA 2004, http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/Getting_it_Right__Doing_it_Right.pdf., accessed 25th October, 2008

lessons learned and case studies to improve the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, particularly its call to make DDR processes more inclusive of women. Their work includes some suggestions on how to develop standard operating procedures on gender, women's needs and perspectives into all phases of DDR. UNIFEM's resources on DDR provide important information about the reasons for women's hesitancy in participation in DDR, and the ways in which UNIFEM hopes to circumvent these hesitancies to increase female participation.

In 2005, the Dutch Conflict Resolution Unit published a study in, "Gender and Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration: Building Blocs for Dutch Policy"[122] which is one of the major supporters of the DDR process and of the gender implications of its current policies. The report covers many of the shortcomings of past DDR processes in Sierra Leone. For instance, it highlights the failure of the DDR to attract many female ex-combatants, due to a lack of protection and support for women escaping abusive relationships with other ex-combatants[123]. In the end, the report suggests that all females in armies must receive adequate support in order to take up their civilian life again after conflict.

In recent years there has been much discussion of the need to increase African capacity to deal with female ex-combatants. The UN's report on its 2005 conference "Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration in Africa"[124] provides an interesting look at the UN's own analysis of its progress on DDR. The report proclaims that "Reintegration process must be more gender-sensitive than in the past", and discusses throughout that there must be increased support for women, children and other vulnerable groups involved with DDR. This conference report serves as an important source of information on the progress that DDR has made with gender, and its ongoing shortcomings.

In July 2003, the African Union (AU) adopted successful milestones in the advancement of women's rights. It adopted the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa to the African

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[122] Bouta, Tsjeard "Gender and Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration: Building Blocs for Dutch Policy". Conflict Research Unit, Netherlands Institute for International Relations (The Hague), March 2005 http://www.iansa.org/women/documents/ddr-gender-report.pdf, accessed 17th November2008

[123] *ibid*., p 12

[124] United Nations, "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Stability in Africa".

Charter on Human Rights and formulated policies to manage gender mainstreaming. Others are the adoption of AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa[125], and the AU on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)[126] that have highlight the need for gender mainstreaming of peace and security processes in Africa. Much of the debate has focused on the Commission on the Status of Women. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has adapted definitions and action to the disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation and reconstruction (DDRR) initiatives in post-conflict situations[127]. In 2005, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) on "Human Security in Africa" addressed key issues such as political and social exclusion, involuntary and voluntary movements of people, protection and empowerment of women, recovery from conflict, food and health security, education, reconciliation and justice[128]. The AU has paid increasing attention to the position of female child combatants during reintegration, and has provided a lot of support to the promotion of the rights enshrined in the ACRWC. It also recognised the special role that women, properly empowered, can play in the promotion and safeguarding of peace.

The AU also recognises the impact of conflict on the rights of the child and the fact that it negatively impacts on the survival and development of the continent. This was highlighted in Resolution 1659 on the plight of African Children of armed conflict. These resolutions call the release of child combatants and for providing them with adequate education, training, rehabilitation and integration them into civil societies[129]. Rachel Murray argues that it has noted the need to promote the education of girls and their empowerment in terms of employment and gender equality[130]. As the Beijing Conference declared the girl child of

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[125] Yetunde Teriba, Presentation On The Au Solemn Declaration On Gender Equality In Africa at The Technical Consultative Meeting On The AU Solemn Declaration On Gender Equality In Africa, 24 – 27 May 2005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia pp 1-6

[126] African Union (AU) Report On The Elaboration Of A Framework Document On Post Conflict Reconstruction And Development (PCRD), Executive Council, Ninth Ordinary Session 25 – 29 June 2006 Banjul, The Gambia EX.CL/274 (IX) pp 4-12

[127] *Loc Cit.*

[128] Human security in Africa , United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), December 2005, p 15

[129] Resolution of the Plight of African Children in Situations of Armed Conflict. CM /Res. *1659* (LXIV) Rev. 1 1996. adopted by the Council of Ministers of the OAU in July 1996, Yaounde, Cameroon Paras 5-7

[130] Murray R., Human Rights in Africa: From OAU to AU: Cambridge University Press, 2004 p148,

today is the woman of tomorrow[131]. The skills, ideas and energy of the girl child are vital for full attainment of the goals of equality, development and peace.

Various institutions also recognised the effects of armed conflict and emphasize the need for women and girl children inclusion in peace building processes (especially in DDR) as a critical area of concern and included specific objectives for their protection and participation. Such as Review of the Implementation of Beijing Platform for Action[132], the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (2000)[133] and UN General Assembly Resolution of the twenty-third special session[134]. Others are the European Parliament Resolution on Participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution (2000) [135] and the G8 Roma Initiative on strengthening the role of Women in Conflict Prevention (2001)[136]. In 2004, the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions on Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building[137]. The above literature reviews on gender and conflict, suggests that although the UN, IGOs, and NGOs increasingly are working with female combatants involved in contemporary armed conflicts, their fledging efforts fall far short of what is needed.

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[131] Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Fourth World Conference on Women, 15th September 1995, Beijing, China 1995 p 14

[132] "Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of Beijing Platform for Action: Report of the Secretary- General" (E/CN.6/2000/PC/2). United Nations Department of Public Information DPI/2035/HCMay 2000

[133] Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action (31 May 2000). http://www.reliefweb.int/library/GHARkit/FilesFeb2001/windhoek_declaration.htm A/Res/S-23/3 (16 November 2000). http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/ress233e.pdf, accessed 10th July 2008

[134] General Assembly Resolution 57/337, 18 July 2003, para 30. S/Res/1325 (31 October 2000).http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf, accessed 10th July 2008

[135] European Parliament, Resolution 2000/2025(INI) 30 November 2000 on Gender- http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/EUResolution.pdf, accessed 10th July 2008

[136] The G8 Conclusion of the meeting of the G8 Foreign Ministers' July 18-19, 2001 Rome, Italy, http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/g7_g8/genoa/att_2.htm, accessed 10th July 2008

[137] Commission on the Status of Women, Agreed Conclusions (14 March 2004). http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/335/28/PDF/N0433528.pdf?OpenElement, accessed 10th July 2008

Another influential study of gender in DDR is by Vanessa Farr "Gendering Demilitarization as a Peace building Tool" published in 2004[138]. She also highlighted the continuing gender deficit in DDR processes[139]. Farr credits Resolution 1325 with placing women firmly on the agenda of DDR planning and implementation by highlighting the specific needs of women and asserting the dynamic nature of gender roles. Farr[140] stresses the imperatives of devising and implementing "gender aware demobilization, demilitarization and reintegration[141]". Farr's analysis brought out major issues in gender in post-conflict societies, highlighting the sensitivity of women's security in post-conflict societies. Farr questions whether the focus on civilian women was empowering, given that attention paid to women was due to their relationship to male combatants while failing to recognise them as active participants in armed groups[142]. One of the major contributions of her work is her seminal argument that owning and operating a weapon is a much gendered concept, and that masculine ideas of armament must be addressed in order to attract women to disarmament process. She also emphasizes the importance of educating male participants in DDR about women's rights:

> their (men's) recognition of women's rights to live in a society free of gender-based violence is one of the most significant psychological changes that can be instituted in male solders after a war, and has profound implications for the reconstruction of society and the sustainability of long-term peace[143].

Properly done, a gender sensitive DDR process can pave the way for women's participation in politics after a conflict, and thus contribute to the creation of a sustainable peace. Farr points out those actors in peace negotiations and agreements should recognize the special needs of women and girls and explicitly involve them in the planning of the DDR process[144]. Farr's work was the first of a substantial number of other short research papers on the topic of gender in DDR. Many of these include steps that women peace builders should take to help

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[138] Farr V. "Gendering Demilitarization as a Peace building Tool".
[139] Farr V. "The Importance of a Gender Perspective to Successful Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Processes," Disarmament Forum, Issue No. 4, 2003 p 27; UNIFEM, "Getting It Right, Doing It Right: Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration," p 3
[140] Farr V., Gendering Demobilization as a Peace building Tool" p 19
[141] *Loc Cit.*
[142] Farr V. "The Importance of a Gender Perspective to Successful Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Processes," p 29
[143] Farr V. "Gendering Demilitarization as a Peace building Tool". p 24
[144] Farr V., "The importance of a gender perspective to successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes", pp 15-26

implement 1325 in their work. In "Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: a Toolkit for Advocacy and Action"[145], contributors Sanam Naraghi Anderlini and Camille Pampell Conaway conclude their remarks with a series of eight steps that women peace builders can take to incorporate gender into their work. These steps include acting as watchdogs for gender sensitivity in UN DDR programming and creating outreach programs for female combatants.

Some of the feminist[146] practitioners have led the analysis of the gender in the post-conflict phase. They have challenged policymakers to deliver on UNSCR 1325 to ensure that women are not simply treated as victims of violence but also as agents of peacemaking who need to be at the table in the peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction planning and implementation[147]. In response to this problem, promoting recognition of the importance of involving women in peace negotiations has been central to feminist peace politics, especially in the last decade. As Jacklyn Cock affirms, it is essential to draw from women's perspectives, since in peacemaking; the most important aspects of which often occur at grassroots level cannot be left to male elite[148]. Similarly, Sanam Naraghi Anderlini asserts that peace cannot succeed with women because the civilian population is largely responsible for translating the agreements reached into concrete initiatives for reconstruction long after the ink has dried on the accords themselves[149]. Likewise, Birgitte Sørensen in gender roles in post-conflict peace building issues a call for more gender-specific data and gender-focused analyses[150]. Regardless of greater awareness of ways in which women's lives are profoundly affected by DDR process, there has been little progress in understanding or altering the norms

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[145] Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi, Camille Pampell Conaway and Lisa Kays. "Transitional Justice and Reconciliation". Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action. Women Waging Peace and International Alert. November 2004.

[146] Cockburn, Cynthia & Zarkov, Dubravka, eds, The Postwar Moment: Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2002 pp 9-21 ;Mazurana Dyan, Raven Roberts, Angela Parpart, Jane, and Lautze, Susan: "Introduction: Gender, Conflict, and Peacekeeping" in Dyan Mazurana, and Angela Raven-Roberts, and Jane Parpart (eds.), Gender, Conflict, and Peacekeeping (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield), 2005 pp. 1-26

[147] Rehn and Sirleaf 2002 Op Cit; and Sorensen B. 1998 Op Cit

[148] Cock Jacklyn. Closing the Circle: Towards a Gender Understanding of War and Peace. The African Gender Institute. http://www.uct.ac.za/org/agi/newslet/vol8/lead.htm 2001 p 1

[149] Anderlini, Sanam, Naraghi, Women at the Peace Table: Making a Difference, New York, United Nations Development Fund for Women 2000 p 6

[150] Sørensen B. Op Cit. p vii

and institutional practices influencing women's DDR process. She emphasises that this is an area for further research.

Recent analysis of DDR processes from a gender perspective have highlighted that female ex-combatants are often invisible and their needs are overlooked[151]. Despite, the increasing recognition of the importance of gender-sensitivity DDR has not yet yielded many examples of best practices. Elisabeth Rehn addressed the Council on the need for Gender Units to be included within all peacekeeping missions; for UN peacekeepers to be trained on the gender implications of their work with regard to the difficulties of DDR of female ex-combatants. In addition, Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf stressed on understanding the impact of armed conflict on women and girls and highlighting women's roles in peace building during their study in 2001 and 2002[152]. The additional insights and concrete, contextual examples offered by Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf expand the scope of analysis and debate regarding ways to improve the condition and participation of women in the area of peace and security.

Nevertheless, McKay and Mazurana[153] found out that equal gender relationship in fighting forces were not clear in their study of Sierra Leone. The focus of the Sierra Leone DDR was on disarming male fighters, and as girls and women had played many different roles in the war, the narrow classification of them as dependants or 'bush wives' effectively excluded them from the purview of these processes. This was largely because many of the roles performed by females were not related to armed or direct participation in combat. They concluded that "women and girls often face huge demobilization and reintegration challenges and in many cases may end up in total isolation and poverty after conflict"[154]. In Sierra Leone, it was evident that there was an over classification of girls and young women as bush wives, camp followers, and sex slaves, which "prevented the establishment of DDR process to address their actual lived experiences[155]". They assert that the problem of reintegration of female child combatants into society and adherence to civilian peacetime values remains a serious concern. It also became clear that both disarmament and reintegration were explicitly

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[151] The Secretary-General's Study. Women, Peace and Security. United Nations. New York. 2002. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/eWPS.pdf, accessed 27th November, 2008
[152] Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Op Cit. p 2
[153] Mazurana and McKay, Where Are the Girls? pp 18-21
[154] *Loc Cit.*
[155] Mazurana and Carlson, From Combat to Community, p 21

gendered processes, something that was not addressed in Sierra Leone. They acknowledge that there is a general consensus that conventional reintegration process has not met their needs. However, they fail to emphasize on the specific rights violated when they are excluded from reintegration process and governmental commitments to fulfill protection of their rights.

Furthermore, Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy Weinstein in "What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-combatants in Sierra Leone"[156] analyze DDR process of ex-combatants level determinants of demobilization and reintegration successful. From the reports, the findings were that participation in the DDR process did not contributed significantly to the reintegration of women into the community. It was found that DDR had little effect in terms of reducing stigmatization of returning combatants, promoting non-violence or the dismantling of factions. In addition, the participation was the strongest predictor of difficulty in achieving social reintegration. For instance, the micro level programme there was little evidence found in the reintegration facilities. However, the report does not provide evidence of impact variance between participants and non participants.

Despite an abundance of literature on lessons learned, loopholes and gaps in the DDR of female ex-combatants remain and need to be identified and addressed if DDR process is to improve so that there is a positive impact on sustainable peace. According to Nathalie de Watteville[157], there has been little attention to or understanding of the specific issues facing female ex-combatants. This includes issues such as identifying women, addressing female health needs and sensitisation of communities on issues of discrimination and addressing difficulties of community acceptance. She highlights that it is often not possible for women to return to their communities of origin, particularly if they have children or have been repeatedly sexually abused and stigmatised. Women also face different challenges to men in economic reintegration because of lack of education, training, skills, and lack of access to credit and childcare facilities. Women frequently face institutionalised discrimination because of the lack of rights to inherit housing or property, thus leaving them socially and

[156] Humphreys Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein. "What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone," June – August 2003 Interim Report, New York and Stanford, CA: Colombia University and Stanford University/PRIDE July 2004
[157] de Watteville Nathalie. "Demobilization and Reintegration Programs: Addressing Gender Issues". Africa Region Working Paper Series, World Bank, June 2003

economically vulnerable. Many female ex-combatants prefer to resettle in cities rather than to return to rural communities of origin as the socialisation they have experienced as part of a military unit makes it difficult for them to accept to return to traditional gender roles in a rural community.

This gap is particularly evident in the DDR process implemented in the immediate aftermath of conflicts to stabilise the security situation and prevent the recurrence of hostilities between armed groups. For example, although girls were nearly one third of child combatants in Sierra Leone, only eight percent were included in DDR process because often they did not have guns[158]. Besides, gender played a key role in defining people's entitlements and access to resources in society in general, as well as their social mobility. The effects of displacements and disintegration of communities also affect women more than men. These challenges in fact surpass the abilities of a DDR process at large. Women find it difficult to defend their position in the informal sectors during reconstruction, even while their care giving burdens remain high[159]. Analyses of the policies of peace building, by the UN all reveal a vague and an undefined focus. This has prevented the development of DDR in regard to the development of policies on women and conflicts. The continuing evidence of gender discrimination found in conflict and post-conflict settings and even within the structure of peace operations suggests that peace building and reconstruction activities are yet to grasp the nettle of the problem. While international concern to address gender-based inequities in conflict and post-conflict settings is high, it has yet to be translated successfully into action. There is a need to question the general approach to gender mainstreaming as it is currently being conducted.

The above literature indicates the willingness among international groups to adopt lessons learned from DDR process in Sierra Leone and develop more effective intervention. However, theoretically speaking, discourse in this area is relatively little. There are few to bridge the gap between the gender-sensitive DDR policies and gender negligent practices. This suggests that peace building, despite being arguably more gender sensitive, gives inadequate attention to the construction of gender norms and the processes by which they can

[158] David Keen, Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone, James Currey, Oxford 2005, p 287
[159] Sørensen, Birgitte Op Cit. p 27

be transformed to ensure more equitable gender relations. There has been little analysis of the specific needs of female ex-combatants and the DDR process has rarely been gender-sensitive. The importance of including a gender perspective in peace building efforts and reconstruction has been recognised, but not yet fully materialized. In addition, lack of timeframe and funds compels focus on "perceived" immediate issues of security and stability and hardly pays attention to gender analysis and mainstreaming. The study also recognises that the best way to promote women's rights and women's empowerment and respond to the needs of female ex-combatants is through a gender-sensitive approach. DDR processes should be viewed as part of a broader security, stabilization and recovery rather than a stand-alone intervention that can result in gender-biased evaluation work. Besides; many authors show concern about the plight of female combatants in post-conflict as victims but do not elaborate on the need and impact of female ex-combatants in the peace process. However, they do not show the inequality of female ex-combatants in terms of educational opportunities and access to other DDR resources. They are more concerned about DDR of ex-combatants in general. This thesis builds upon shifting the focus to women's inclusion and gender issues in the phases of DDR process to seek a rights-based approach to DDR which if applied may make the DDR process more effective for female ex-combatants. Moreover to add to existing literature the remedial actions by including process evaluations, policies analyses, define and sustain equitable peace building initiatives. Therefore the study ultimately supports effective approaches to gender and DDR that benefit both women and men. This will involve the finding from the research and could be applied to articulating improved policies and helping process designers to think outside the box on gender mainstreaming and support the kind of transformative change in conflict and post-conflict settings that would recognize and benefit from the full potential of all citizens. Therefore, the moment is ripe to launch an inclusive discussion on shortcomings, dilemmas and challenges within a broad political framework. Based on the case study evidence, I conclude that a gendered framework of conflict and peace broadens our understanding of the DDR process

Organisation of Chapters

To assess the DDR process of female ex-combatants this study will be structured into five chapters:

Chapter One

Chapter one consists of a brief introduction to the problem under research: it explores the significance of the study, the literature review, the conceptual framework and the research methodology.

Chapter Two

Chapter two presents a brief background of the conflict in Sierra Leone. It highlights the situation of female ex-combatants who are seldom viewed contextually or comprehensively within the realm of armed conflict and succeeding DDR.

Chapter Three

Chapter three gives a general consensus about DDR process in Sierra Leone, and addresses the three phases outlined above, although the focus is on women's roles as constructive agents in the rebuilding process. The case study looks at the UNAMSIL as a model of successful peace building by both Sierra Leoneans and the international community, but also how DDR specifically excluded women ex-combatants. It will also review national strategy, conceptual framework, institutional set-up and implementation. It analyzes the history of the UNAMSIL peace building efforts in Sierra Leone from the late 1990s to 2005. It discusses a case study detailing the processes of DDR and the involvement of female ex-combatants as well as how its standards for DDR provide some indication as to what is to be considered DDR during conflict and post-conflict. This chapter also deals with challenges associated with DDR. Here the findings of the research and their interpretation will be given. It examines the factors that influence success and failure of the DDR process, one on political reconstruction, and another on economic reconstruction and one on social reconstruction. In reference to the challenges faced during DDR process it assess if new lessons can be drawn for current DDR processes.

Chapter Four

Chapter four concludes the study regarding female ex-combatants experiences in Sierra Leone's DDR process.

Chapter Five

The final chapter offers a "road map" for the design and planning for the future DDR that should be considered during DDR development phases, their implementation and how it would be implemented based on lessons learned thus far in Sierra Leone. Finally, suggestions are discussed for more gender-sensitive analytical and operational approaches. Therefore the report aims at providing a novel structure that can assist in the design and planning of DDR process for female ex-combatants in a manner presently unavailable to DDR.

CHAPTER TWO

Historical Background

The causes and dynamics of armed violence in Sierra Leone

To comprehend Sierra Leone's DDR process, one needs to understand how and why female became part of an armed faction and in what context they did so. The history and nature of conflict in Sierra Leone are well publicised. In this chapter the study discusses the main underlying factors of the Sierra Leonean war in some brief and involvement of female combatants.

Sierra Leone is a small country on the South-West of Africa, bounded in the North and East by Guinea and by Liberia in the Southeast and on the west coast by the Atlantic Ocean. Sierra Leone's territory covers 27,699 square miles (71,740 km^2), housing a pre-conflict population estimated at 4.3 million[160]. Sierra Leone is endowed with mineral resources, namely diamond, gold, bauxite, rutile and iron ore. Although only six point seven per cent of the land is arable, it also produces cash crops, in particular, coffee, cocoa, ginger and rice[161]. Freetown, the capital city, is located in the western part of the country.

Like many West African states, Sierra Leone has an intriguing history marked by strife and unfulfilled potential. Sierra Leone, gained its independence from the British in 1961. After six years of transition consecutively under the first Prime Minister, Milton Margai (1961-1964) and his half brother Albert Margai (1964-1967)[162] the country fell prey to increasing political decline[163], dwindling economy due corrupt one-party system perpetuated by Siaka Stevens (1968-85) and his All People's Congress (APC). He progressively consolidated his power based on violence, corruption, intimidation, and political and social exclusion, while relying heavily on the diamond sector for its resources. The political system in place was favourable only to a handful of people connected to the government and its networks. His

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[160] Alison Smith, L. Catherine Gambette and Thomas Longley No peace without justice, Conflict Mapping In Sierra Leone, Violations of International Humanitarian Law 1991 to 2002. March 2004 p 13

[161] *Loc Cit.*

[162] Smillie Ian *et al*. The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds and Human Security. Partnership Africa Canada. 2002 p 11

[163] William Reno, Warlord Politics and the African State, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998 p 25

hand-picked successor General Joseph Momoh[164] led over an asset stripping and incompetent and oppressive government based on patronage[165] and authoritarian, hegemonic rule.

In Sierra Leone the root causes of organised armed violence are commonly traced to the workings of the political economy and the nature of the state. For almost 30 years, all government institutions, including the military, degenerated irreparably and with them the rule of law and the country's economy[166]. Accordingly, large numbers of unemployed young men began gathering in town centres known as potes where they smoked marijuana and discussed politics[167]. Marginalized youths became vulnerable and were easily utilizable for evil political aims. Furthermore, in 1984, frustration with government's corruption and mismanagement led to the formation of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)[168]. The RUF asserted itself as a political movement with the aim of salvaging the country and overthrowing the APC[169]. The rebels of the RUF movement were made up of Sierra Leonean fighters and Liberian elements from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), who had had received military training in guerrilla warfare in Libya and Burkina Faso[170]. As a result on March 23, 1991, its invasion of Sierra Leone from Liberia on East of the country triggered the civil war that was to last eleven years[171].

Sierra Leone's strife gave birth to numerous opposition within the nation between people of the same communities and resulted in several factions fighting against the Sierra Leone

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[164] Bangura Y. 'Understanding the Political and Cultural Dynamics of the Sierra Leone War: A Critique of Paul Richard's Fighting for the Rain Forest,' African Development, Vol. XXII, No. 3/4, 1997 pp 117-148: Adekeye Adebajo, Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series, Lynne Reinner, USA, 2002 p.15: Paul Collier, "Doing Well Out of War: An Economic Perspective," in Mats Berdal and David Malone (eds), Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars, Boulder and London: Lynne Reinner Publishers, Inc, 2000 p 91

[165] Paul Richards, Fighting for the Rain Forest: War Resources and Youth in Sierra Leone, Oxford: James Currey. African Affairs Vol. 96 No. 383, 1996 pp 165-186

[166] Alie, J.A.D., A New History of Sierra Leone New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990, http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2001/5730.htm, accessed 19th October 2008

[167] Abdullah I and Muana, P., The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone:A revolt of the Lumpenproletariat. In, Clapham (ed), African guerrillas. Oxford: James Currey. 1998 p 1-18

[168] Ibrahim Abdullah and Patrick Muana, "The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone," in Christopher Clapham (ed.), African Guerrillas Oxford: James Currey, 1998, pp. 173-17

[169] *Loc Cit.*

[170] Adekeye Adebajo: Building Peace in West Africa,(London: Boulder, 2002), 82

[171] *Ibid* p 178

government as well as against rebel forces. Principally the RUF battled the government. In Sierra Leone, civil war was initiated by Foday Sankoh's RUF against the government of President Ahmad Kabbah, which had come to power in 1991 through a military coup by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) headed by Major Johnny Paul Koroma[172]. In April 1992, Momoh was ousted by Captain Valentine Strasser's National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), in which was in turn overthrown by military in response to his failure to pay the forces led by Brigadier Julius Maada Bio in 1996[173].

From 1992 to 1994 the conflict was characterized by increased rebel activity in diamond mining areas and a growing number of civilian casualties due to attacks on villages[174]. The main perpetrators were the rebel forces of the RUF, the AFRC, the CDF and the West Side Boys, a splinter group of the AFRC. The period between 1992 and 1996 was the worst period of fighting between the Government forces and the rebels RUF, the AFRC, and the pro-government Civil Defense Forces (CDF) militias knows as Kamajors[175]. In the wake of this instability, elections were held and Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was elected in September 1996.Following a brief interlude of ceasefire and elections, war resumed and the government suffered another coup in 1997, this time at the hands of the AFRC, when members of the national army overthrew the democratically elected government, invited the rebels into the capital city. In March 1998 President Kabbah's government was restored to power through the efforts of the military wing of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Throughout the 1990s, the shadow state with its coercive tactics and privatised control over resources and territory rendered much of the formal state irrelevant, and Sierra Leone descended into a traumatic era of violence and humanitarian crisis.

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[172] UNAMSIL: A Peacekeeping Success: Lessons Learned," (Washington, D.C.: Refugees International, 2002, http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/publication/detail/3050, accessed 29th September, 2008

[173] Bangura Y., Understanding the political and cultural dynamics of the Sierra Leone war: a critique of Paul Richard's fighting for the rainforest. Africa Development XXII V No. 3/4 1997 pp 129-130

[174] Hirsch, John L., Sierra Leone: Diamonds and the Struggle for Democracy, International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series, Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2001

[175] The *Kamajors* were the main Civil Defence Force, employing initiated hunters - in Mende, the main language of the south and east referred to as kamajoi or kamasoi, kamajoisia - and used by successive governments as a proxy force against the rebels

Despite the external intervention made by the Military Observer Group from (ECOMOG) of (ECOWAS), the violence spread to all parts of the country. Three peace agreements were signed as a result: the Abidjan Accord of November 1996, the Conakry Peace Plan of October 1997, and the Lomé Peace Agreement of July 1999 all of which failed. Rebellion, intervention, and state collapse all continue to cohabit in Sierra Leone. After attempts at power sharing failed, the war was brought to a close with the capture of the leader of the RUF; an intervention by what was (at the time) the largest UN mission in the world and robust military action by third parties, notably Guinea and the UK. However, much effort was made to consolidate the peace, including strengthening the capacity of police and armed forces, reintegrating ex-combatants, and promoting human rights and national reconciliation.

From 1991 to 2001, the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in Sierra Leone were affected, particularly in the south-eastern part of the country, where the conflict was the most severe. During the war, Sierra Leone experienced violence of horrific proportions exacerbating the plight of women (particularly rural women). Both the government armed forced and rebels groups committed atrocities in Sierra Leone[176]. The rebel attacks drove tens of thousands of rural population to death, and hundreds of thousands were displaced from their homes and flee to urban areas, including the capital, Freetown. As a consequence, roughly 400,000 Sierra Leoneans were internally displaced, 280,000 more have fled to neighbouring Guinea, and another 100,000 have fled to Liberia particularly children and women. Moreover, the conflict targeted women and girls as a tactic of war and many became victims of rape, non-sexual assault, and atrocities such as the evisceration of pregnant females, practised by the RUF rebels.

There are multiple causes and dynamics in every conflict. The Sierra Leone's civil war was unique for the reason that it was not based on perceived ethnic, religious or ancestral differences. In the history of world conflicts, this absence of a religious or ethnic background is rather uncommon in Africa. Poor governance and deteriorating economic conditions were key underlying root causes of the Sierra Leonean conflict. Among the social issues that precipitated the war were the discrimination of civilians by elites that enforced arbitrary laws;

[176] John Sweeney, "Sierra Leone: Boys Taught to Torture and Maim" in Daily Mail and Guardian, 22 May 2000, Johannesburg, SA, 2000 p 2

a lack of awareness among the population about citizen rights; and an unresponsive, non-transparent, and unaccountable government[177]. There are various reasons advanced by different authors to explain the causes of the Sierra Leone conflict. Many arguments have been made regarding the role of diamonds and greed in the Sierra Leonean conflict. However, diamond was the principle means to fund the war in Sierra Leone for both sides[178].

For instance the World Bank Study in 2005 that sheds light on the causes of the conflict, points out that it was the collapse of institutions that was the root cause of the civil war, not diamonds[179]". Likewise, David Keen examines the complex causes of the war in depth and stresses the importance of widespread grievances built up by the peacetime political economy as well as grievances caused during the war itself[180]. Paul Richards has written at length on this issue and stresses the strong feeling of exclusion among young people in particular[181]. It was mainly frustrated young men who protested against the bad governance system and the lack of opportunities for them. The long years of neglect of youths in the development programmes of successive governments in Sierra Leone has been widely acknowledged as a major cause of the war indeed, during the dictatorial rule of the APC. The key issues raised by most analysts could be summarized as originating from political and state fragility, corruption and economic mismanagement, lack of opportunities for youth, and the underdevelopment of rural areas as being characterised by crisis and despair[182].The inability of the political elites to carry out part of their constitutional duties of governance led to a resort to arms. The people who are at the receiving end of governance expect some basic fulfilment of their needs. While, it is true that the government might not be in a good

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[177] Archibald Steve and Paul Richards. "Seeds and Rights: New Approaches to Post-war Agricultural Rehabilitation in Sierra Leone." Disasters Vol. 26 No. 4 2002 pp 358-360

[178] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone.

[179] Joseph Hanlon, "Is the International Community Helping to Recreate the Preconditions for War in Sierra Leone?" The Round Table, Vol. 94 No. 381 September 2005, p 460.

[180] Keen, David Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone Oxford: James Currey for International Peace Academy (IPA) 2005

[181] Richards Paul Fighting for the Rainforest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone The International African Institute in association with James Currey, Oxford, 1996: Peters, K. and P. Richards '"Why We Fight:" Voices of Youth Combatants in Sierra Leone,' Africa, Vol. 68, No. 2, 1998 pp183-20

[182] Bruce Baker and Roy May, "Reconstructing Sierra Leone," Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, Vol. 42 No. 1 March 2004, p 36: Zack-Williams Op Cit.; also 'Sierra Leone: Crisis and Despair', ROAPE, No.49, winter 1990, p 22-33

financial state to fulfil all its peoples needs, the perception by the local population that the political leaders are diverting the proceeds of its mineral resources, could lead to the eruption of violence when the peoples needs are not met.

Despite the hiccups and regressions between 1998 and 2001, Sierra Leone has undergone a remarkable transition following the Abuja agreement. Part of this success must be attributed to the implementation of disarmament and demobilization. The process has successfully neutralised the threat of the AFRC, CDF, RUF and other factions by taking part of their weapons and demobilizing and disbanding their organization structure. Elections were held in May 2002 in which Kabbah was elected president. The war was officially declared over in January 2002. Furthermore, the UN Peace-building Commission adopted Sierra Leone as one of its first two focus countries. Thus, insights into Sierra Leone's war-to-peace transition are useful for the country and the international community.

The civil war in Sierra Leone had reached unimaginable atrocities involving girl child and women abduction, where they were kidnapped and forced into subservience by the various factions. Women and girls became the targets in the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone. The conflict saw widespread abuses, in particular rape and sexual slavery, where girls and women were forced into "marriage", domestic servitude or other forced labour that involved forced sexual activity, including rape by their captors; the use of child combatants; mutilation; destruction of property; and forced displacement[183]. These forces of armed conflict were also in many respects extensions of conventional patriarchal structures in which girls and women had long been regarded as subservient to male authority. Indeed, Sierra Leonean societal arrangements have historically been shaped by patriarchal relations that legitimized the economic, socio-cultural, and sexual dominance of males over females. Yet when civic conflict expanded in Sierra Leone, women were swept up by forces of violence over which they had little control, and the deep-seated gender differentiation that shaped their realities became even more pronounced within the context of 'militarized masculinity' induced by the civil war. Militarized masculinity thus became the dominant force in controlling not only gender relations, but also the acts of ordinary citizens. To these women their world has included situations of victimization, of the perpetration of violence, and of resistance, often

[183] Janie Hampton ed., Internally Displaced People, Earthscan Publications, 1998, pp. 53-55

experienced in a shifting and dialectical fashion. Focusing on the complex sets of realities that confronted many female combatants has compelled us to move beyond a simplistic depiction of all female ex-combatants as merely passive victims[184]. Throughout both the war and the uneasy peace which has followed, their capacity for agency and resilience has been apparent.

According to UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report, throughout the conflict, thousands of women and girls in Sierra Leone were subjected to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), forced marriages and situations comparable to sexual slavery[185]. The war claimed some 20,000 lives and displaced forty percent of the national population[186]. The existence of displaced persons is amplified by the fact that Sierra Leone is also occupied by approximately 60,000 refugees from neighbouring countries[187]. The existence of further suffering people provides another group that requires attention and services. The violation was so elusive and raised many questions both within Sierra Leone and on the international scene on the rationale behind the war.

Child combatants in Sierra Leone

In recent history Sierra Leone surely ranks among the worst users of child combatants. In Sierra Leone where fifty percent of the population comprised children under eighteen[188], between 20,000 and 48,000 children were associated with armed groups[189]. Many of children were abducted[190]. For instance, from 1992 and 1996, between the Government forces and the RUF an estimated 5,400 children were forced to fight on both sides[191]. It has been estimated that the government utilised between 1,000 –2,000 child combatants among its fighting

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[184] McKay Susan., "Girls as Weapons of Terror in Northern Uganda and Sierra Leonean Rebel Fighting Forces." Studies in Conflict and Terrorism No. 28, 2005 p 391
[185] UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) report 2001
[186] Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Freetown: Government of Sierra Leone. 2005
[187] World Fact Book: Sierra Leone. www.cia.org/factbook/ throughout February and March 2005
[188] Amnesty International, Sierra Leone: childhood – a casualty of conflict, Amnesty International, London, August 2000, p 1
[189] Mazurana and Carlson, 'From Combat to Community
[190] Save the Children, War Brought us Here: Protecting children displaced within their own countries by conflict, Save the Children, 2000, p 93
[191] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human/child/survey/profile2.htm, accessed 12th July 2008

forces, whilst the RUF utilised between 3,000-4,000 child soldiers[192]. However, the number is not accurate as the counting was done before the two attacks on the capital when several thousand children were abducted by the alliance of RUF and the AFRC. According to Mazurana and McKay, children constituted fifty percent of the AFRC/RUF members, with girls ranging from thirty three percent to fifty percent of the total number of children[193]. Other UN reports have stated that children constituted one quarter of the SLA/CDF coalition forces; with girls making thirty three percent of the SLA children and ten percent of the CDF children[194]. Table 1 below presents the breakdown of child solders and girl soldiers in factions:

Table 1: Distribution of child soldiers and girls by Faction

Force	Total	Child Soldiers	Girl Soldiers
RUF	45,000	22,500	7,500
AFRC	10,000	5,000	1,667
SLA	14,000	3,500	1,167
CDF	68,865	17,216	1,722
Total	**137,865**	**48,216**	**12,056**

Source: Mazurana and Carlson, 'From Combat to Community p 12

Besides, during the civil war, it estimated that 5,000 children and teenagers were actually involved as combatants and another 5,000 were used for related activities within the forces[195]. Thousands of children under the age of eighteen, both boys and girls, served as child combatants in Sierra Leone's internal armed conflict. Thousands more, while not directly deployed in combat, were forcibly joined to fighting forces[196]. Many of the children, who

[192] Brett R. and McCallan, M. Children: The Invisible Soldiers Radda Barnen, Save The Children Sweden, 1998 p 222
[193] Mazurana and McKay, Where are the Girls?
[194] The Effects of Armed Conflicts on Girls: A Discussion Paper for the UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, Staff working paper No. 23, World Vision International, July 1996
[195] Zack-Williams, A.B., Child combatants in the civil war in Sierra Leone. Review of African Political Economy Vol. 87 2001 p 73; Wessels, M. Recruitment of children as combatants in Sub-Saharan Africa: An ecological analysis. The comparative study of conscription in the armed forces Vol. 20 2002 p 245
[196] UNICEF Canada, Child Combatants, http://www.unicef.ca/eng/travail/demobolish.html#autres, accessed 12th July 2008

were abducted for labour, including young girls who were raped and forced into sexual slavery, eventually became fighters with the rebel forces[197]. It was reported that girls made sixty percent of the children abducted in Sierra Leone[198]. In addition, the RSLMF (national army) RUF/SL deployed under-age female combatants[199]. Some of these children were as young as five years-old[200]. There were many reasons to use child combatants to including the fact that they were economically feasible and lucrative investments, but they were a source of priceless intelligence network. For them, children join armed groups, not out of conscious and deliberate decision, but due to socialization (through family, media and community members) or indoctrination which "negates any presumption of voluntary participation. Thus, it is believed that although some children do actively participate in political ideology and conflicts, this is not because they have the capacity to make fully informed choices among those competing ideologies[201].

The majority of literature documented how state and political factions abduct children from homes, villages, schools, markets and even from refugee camps. Thousands of children were reported as being kidnapped and forced into combat through the use of drugs and threats. Atrocities involving the forced recruitment of children as young as six, gang raping of women and girls, slavery and torture and continued brutal amputations and mutilations[202]. Young girls who were abducted and forcibly recruited were often forced into sexual slavery or "marriage" with individual rebels[203]. This was referred as 'bush marriages' or 'AK-47 marriages' whereby girls were deemed to be the (sexual) 'property' of specific rebel males.

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[197] U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1999: Sierra Leone, 25 February 2000, http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1999_hrp_report/sierrale.html accessed 17th July 2008

[198] The Impact of Conflict on Women and Girls in West and Central Africa and the UNICEF Response, UNICEF, February 2005

[199] Peters K. and Richards, P. 'Why we Fight: Voices of Youth Combatants in Sierra Leone,' Africa, Vol.68 No.2, 1998, p186

[200] Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Sierra Leone, 24/02/2000, 23rd Sess., UN Doc. CRC/C/15/Add.116, (2000), http://www.hri.ca/ fortherecord2000/documentation/tbodies/crc-c-15-add116.htm, accessed 17th July 2008

[201] Guy Goodwin-Gill and Ilene Cohn., Child combatants: the role of children in armed conflicts. New York: Clarendon Press 1994 pp 35-36; Easton D. and Dennis j. Children in the political system: origin of political legitimacy. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book 1969 pp 36-47

[202] Human Rights Watch, We'll Kill You if You Cry: Sexual Violence in the Sierra Leone Conflict (2003), http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/sierraleone/sierleon0103.pdf, accessed 12th August 2008

[203] *Loc Cit.*

These girls who were married to senior commanders actually benefited through access to more food, a higher social status within the group, and a degree of protection from other males. However, combat activities were a significant part of the duties of many girls. Others were typically forced to participate in support activities such as cooking, looting and pottering. Rape of captured young girls was routine[204]. It was reported that more than 10,000 children were serving as child combatants with the rebels and civil militia[205]. Although a child is defined as a person under the age of sixteen in Sierra Leone[206], however, children below that age set limit were overlooked. Andrew Mawson et al reported that most of the children abducted in Sierra Leone were younger than ten years old[207]**.** In Sierra Leone, the child combatants were used in combat missions of ambush, raid and interdiction to mention a few[208]. Children as young as eight years old participated in the conflict. Moreover, children were involved in heavy gun fighting.

However, Peters and Richards have estimated that 'half of all combatants in the RUF/SL are in the age range eight to fourteen years[209]. There are also records of under-eighteen combatants in army irregular units and the Kamajor militia. For instance, it was reported that the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF) (national army) and RUF/SL deployed under-age female combatants[210]. During Sierra Leone's conflict, it was reported that these children were captured, manipulated and used by all sides to their advantage. The RUF is well known for its abduction and forcible recruitment of children, both boys and girls,

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[204] Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Combatants, Sierra Leone: War-Related Sexual Abuse, http://www.child-combatants.org/cs/childcombatants.nsf/0/2796e9ec29e5c9f280256c8d003c97b1?OpenDocument, accessed 17th July 2008

[205] Finkbeiner, L. Children Soldiers: The Loss of Innocence: Excerpts from "Children Soldiers: The Loss of Innocence", http://www.actioninafrica.info/children-soldiers-loss-innocence, accessed 1st July 2008

[206] Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act (1926), Cap. 31 of the revised Laws of Sierra Leone 1960, in Section 2

[207] Andrew Mawson, Rebecca Dodd and John Hilary, War brought us here: Protecting children displaced within their own countries by conflict , Save The Children provides case studies from Angola, Colombia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, London, UK, 2000 p 21: Wessells, M. Child Soldiers, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, http://www.pangaea.org/street_children/africa/armies.htm Chicago Nov/Dec 1997 accessed 26th August 2008

[208] Peters Krijin and Paul Richards, Why We Fight in Africa, "Voices of Youth Combatants in Sierra Leone Africa, Vol.68 No. 2, 1998, p 186

[209] Peters and Richards, Op Cit. p186

[210] *Loc Cit.*

for use as combatants, forced labour and sexual slaves. However, the CDF also recruited children to a large extent. The rebel groups manipulated the children in the Kamajors, the boys were told that they would gain magical powers by following the rules[211] and the magic would protect them and stop the enemy bullets[212]. These children were also abducted and forced in conscription into the fighting forces and continuous violations of their basic human rights.

Furthermore, the underlying assumption of this view is that while war may cause many of the young ones to become extremely vulnerable, this does not mean that they are passive victims of adults wars. Instead it has been argued that young people employ ingenious survival strategies, and they have positive aspirations, hopes and achievements[213]. In addition, it has been argued that children are recruited as a means of survival, curb unemployment and alternative schooling due to the collapse of the formal education system due to war[214]. Other authors submit that poverty is a major environmental factor, which makes children vulnerable to involvement in armed conflict[215]. Rachel Brett and Margaret McCallin, give an example of Sierra Leone where children joined for the 'adventure' attracted by the sheer fun of 'belonging' or in order to become famous and admired[216]. Girls' reasons for joining fighting forces are similar to those of boys, though the notion of joining freely is especially questionable. However, the popular reasons for girls to join fighting forces include abduction, response to local violence and hope to improve career options and financial gain[217] Brett avows that girls join voluntarily and deliberately choose to have more than one partner because it brings benefits such as protection, money, clothes, transport or for emotional reasons[218]. However, Peters and Richards maintain that "the trend to more youthful

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[211] *ibid*
[212] *ibid*
[213] Vandergrift K; Lochhead, D and Steinmann, R. Small arms, children and armed conflict: Background research paper 2002 p 8
[214] Twum-Danso Op Cit. p 30
[215] Brett R. & I. Specht Young soldiers, why they choose to fight, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. CERI 2004 p 14 9-38 & 85-104
[216] Brett Rachel and McCallin, Margaret, Op Cit, p 8
[217] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls? p 21
[218] Brett Rachel 'Child Soldiers' in Amnesty International, In the Firing Line: War and Children's Rights, London: Amnesty International, 1999 p 125

combatants...reflects the discovery that children their social support disrupted by war- make brave and loyal fighters[219]".

In addition, it as has been claimed that the technological development in gun manufacturing which reduced the size and weight of assault rifles, the abundance of cheap and easy-to-use small arms made it easier to induce youth and children to take up arms[220]. It is estimated that during this period more than 5,400 children were forced to fight[221] during the invasion of the capital, Freetown. These children, both boys and girls, perform various tasks assigned by their commanders including cooking, cleaning, fetching water, sex[222], and of course combat duty and other atrocities committed by the RUF and other rebels[223]. It was also reported that sixty percent of those abducted were girls and most of whom suffered repeated sexual violence[224]. Many of the girls are suffering from vesico-vaginal fistula (VVF) which is clearly identified as a result of rape and child-bearing when their bodies are still immature[225]. They also play a variety of roles ranging from front line fighters, porters or cooks and sexual slaves. It is clear that girl child combatants are impacted in different ways from boy child combatants in that they experienced rape, hardship and loss of dignity. In some instances, kidnapped children were forced to participate in atrocities in their own villages as a way of breaking ties with their community and making them fully dependent on the commander and unit who had seized them[226] while many have died, others have endured serious physical and psychological trauma. Besides, the smuggling of diamond allows the warlord to acquire weapons and use of child solders[227].

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[219] Peters and Richards Op Cit. p 183
[220] Stohl R., Under the sun. Children and small arms, African Security Review Vol. 11 No. 3 2002 pp 20-21
[221] Malan M. Disarming and demobilising child soldiers: The underlying challenges, Peace Missions Programme, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria Published in African Security Review, 2002 Vol. 9 No 5/6, http://www.iss.co.za/ASR/9No5And6/Malan.html, accessed 31st July 2008
[222] United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) report 2001 p 22
[223] Kwesi Aning and Angela Mcintyre "From Youth Rebellion to Child Abduction: The Anatomy of Recruitment in Sierra Leone in Angela Mcintyre (ed) "Invisible Stakeholders: Children and war in Africa, Institute for Security Studies, 2005 p 77
[224] Walker Anne., IWCT Globalnet, A Fact Sheet on Women and Armed Conflict. October 23, 2002
[225]Dyan Mazurana and Susan McKay, "Child Soldiers: What about the Girls? Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Vol. 57 No. 5 pp30-35
[226] Sean Bradley, "Child Combatants: General Background and the case of Sierra Leone," in Human Development 2, (AFTH2) Annual Report Fiscal Year 2001, World Bank, 2001, p 38.
[227] Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSUCC) Report Op Cit. p 13

In Sierra Leone, thirty five per cent of all fighters in the Sierra Leone war were children and that twenty five per cent of these were girls[228]. Others claim that as many as forty per cent of child combatants were girls[229]. The number of girls under eighteen is around twelve per cent of total forces[230]. UNICEF reports that 8,466 children were officially documented "missing" from 1991 to 2002 and that girls likely represented half of this number[231]. Andy Brooks indicates that 4,814 children were "missing" after the January 1999 Freetown attack, forty eight percent of whom were female[232]. McKay and Mazurana suggest that the number of girls who participated in armed groups was probably in the range of 8,600-11,400[233]. It has been said that children constituted fifty per cent of the AFRC/RUF members, with girls making up to between thirty three and fifty percent of the total number of children. Several UN reports state that children constituted one quarter of the government coalition forces (SLA and CDF), with girls making up thirty three percent of the SLA children and ten percent of the CDF children[234]. In addition, it has been estimated that one third of all underage combatants were girls[235]. Girl combatants have been used to augment the number of rebel fighters (CDF and RUF) in supplementary roles such as cooks, domestics, and porters, and are sometimes given positions of power as spies, porters, commanders and frontier fighters[236]. Majority of abducted girls and women were also subjected to forced marriage, becoming what in local parlance are known as 'bush wives'[237]. The rebels' favoured girls and young women whom they believed to be virgins. In Sierra Leone it was thirty two percent reported to having been

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[228] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls? p 92

[229] Save the Children. Forgotten Casualties of War: Girls in Armed Conflict. London: Save the Children. 2005, http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/temp/scuk/cache/cmsattach/2698_GAAF%20report.pdf, accessed 29th October, 2008

[230] Mazurana and Carlson, From Combat to Community, p 3

[231] Sherrill Whittington. "The Impact of Conflict on Women and Girls in West and Central Africa and the UNICEF Response," UNICEF, 2005, p. 29

[232] Andy Brooks, "The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Children Associated with the Fighting Forces. Lessons Learned in Sierra Leone, 1998-2002," Dakar Yoff: UNICEF, West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2005, p 2.

[233] Mazurana and McKay, Where are the Girls? p 91

[234] *Loc Cit.*

[235] *ibid.*

[236] McKay S., M. Burman, M. Gonsalves M. and Worthen, Known but Invisible: Girl Mothers Returning from Fighting Forces. Child Soldiers Newsletter, 2004, May/June Issue 6 pp 10-11

[237] Richards, P. Op Cit; Lebanese Connection, Partnership Africa, Canada., A Dirty War In West Africa: RUF and The Destruction of S/L, Hurst & Company, London, UK., 2005, www.ub.uit.no/munin/bitstream/10037/1586/1/thesis.pdf, accessed 12th October, 2008

raped and sixty six per cent were single mothers[238]. As a result, Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STD) especially gonorrhoea were rampant, unplanned pregnancies and child bearing. Access to medical facilities was limited. It was considerably difficult to find any figures on how many women over eighteen were active in the various fighting forces in Sierra Leone. The difficulties in assessing numbers are due in part to the fact that most girls and women did not disarm and demobilize after the war but drifted quietly back to their communities and also that most NGO projects targeting female ex-combatants have only sponsored those under eighteen years of age. It is safe to say that during the Sierra Leone war, all fighting forces recruited girls and young women, who proved to be 'highly effective combatants'[239].

Women combatants

During and after the war, stories of the brutality of rebel women became a popular theme. The increasing participation of women in conflict challenges traditional gender roles. Recognition of these changing gender relations differs greatly among actors in conflict and post-conflict settings. Many receive basic combat and weapons training upon entry into armed groups. However, the majority act in supporting roles. Carlson and Mazurana found that forty four percent RUF females received basic military and weapons training[240]. Most commonly, females in armed groups served in overlapping support roles[241]. It was found that females served in armed groups as follows: seventy two percent as cooks, sixty eight percent as porters, sixty two percent caring for sick and wounded, sixty two percent as wives, forty four percent as food producers, forty percent as messengers, thirty four percent as fighters, twenty two percent as spies, eighteen percent in communications, twelve percent in diamond mining[242]. It also recognizes gender as a key factor in maintaining fighting forces. They serve as sexual slaves, gatherers, cooks, porters, looters, child keepers, spies, and informants, and messengers'[243]. Joshua Goldstein suggests females are confined to supporting roles because

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[238] Save the Children, Forgotten Casualties of War: Girls in Armed Conflict,
[239] Abdullah, Ibrahim, and Patrick Muana, The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone in Claphan Christopher ed., African Guerrillas. Indiana University Press. Indianapolis. 1998 p 180
[240] Carlson and Mazurana, From Combat to Community: Women and Girls of Sierra Leone, p 12
[241] McKay and Mazurana, Where Are the Girls? p 92
[242] *Loc Cit.*
[243] Enloe C. Maneuvers, The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives, pp 37-38

their labour "keeps the war machine running[244]". Farr also argues that women "supply the essentials of war: information, food, clothing and shelter[245]. Women in these roles are frequently delineated as 'camp followers. Enloe rejects the use of this term as it implies a "parasitic" relationship with armed groups that disguise the centrality of women and girls' roles for the functioning of these groups'[246]. She goes further and explains that the idea of the woman-as-camp-follower can become publicly salient whenever authorities imagine women impoverished by war to be strategizing to survive by creating some sort of relationship with men as soldiers.

Women played an active role in all armed groups in the conflict. Some joined the groups voluntarily or stayed with them after temporary capture or rape[247]. A number of females joined the pro-government CDFs at the request of husbands or with family approval upon the threat of violence[248]. The majority of females were abducted or forcibly recruited into armed groups. Khadija Bah argues that the RUF particularly targeted females from marginalized rural areas for forcible recruitment[249]. There are no precise figures on the number of women associated with the armed groups in Sierra Leone. One of the reasons was that women were certainly not invisible to the RUF, who either recruited them as willing volunteers or abducted them. Although there is no official number from RUF, it is estimated that 10,000 women were associated with armed groups; 9, 5000 of these having been abducted[250]. Approximately twelve percent of armed groups were made up of women[251]. Civilian, women were subjected to gender-specific abuses, including rape, sexual slavery and forced marriages to members of the various factions. Because of various forms of sexual abuse, girls are at

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[244] Goldstein, Joshua, S. War and Gender. How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa, p 380
[245] Farr V. "Paper 20: Gendering Demilitarization as a Peace building Tool," p 6.
[246] Enloe, Cynthia, Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1990
[247] Binta Mansaray, "Women against Weapons: A Leading Role for Women in Disarmament," in Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone, ed. Anatole Ayissi and Robin-Edward Poulton (Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2000), p 144
[248] Carlson and Mazurana, From Combat to Community: Women and Girls of Sierra Leone, ed. Sanam Naraghi Anderlini Cambridge: Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2004 p 13
[249] Khadija Alia Bah,, "Occasional Paper: Rural Women and Girls in the War in Sierra Leone," Conciliation Resources, 1997, http://www.c-r.org/resources/occasional-papers/rural-women-sierra-leone.php, accessed 12th October, 2008
[250] Farr V. "Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Processes: Where Do Women Stand."
[251] Carlson and Mazurana, From Combat to Community: p 2

higher risk and face serious health problems related to pregnancy, HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). These gender-specific violations are criminal, in particular, and were underreported and under recorded. It should also be noted that human rights abuses have been committed by all parties to the armed conflict. Even before the conflict, women in Sierra Leone had been marginalized in all spheres of life. Some of the reasons for this were low or no literacy, poverty, lack of capacity to participate in decision-making and cultural constraints, all of which contributed to the low status of women in society. This, to a large extent has to do with the patriarchal nature of the society and the entrenched cultural practices that are biased against women.

Given the nature of the conflict in Sierra Leone, the conflict situations presented women with a myriad of roles such as active supporting roles in the conflict as combatants[252] and assisting armed groups[253]. Many women experience conflict differently; as victims and as perpetrators, civilians and combatants, some by force, some for survival and others by choice. In addition the role of sex work this is one in which women's' and men's' experiences differ greatly.

Sexual violence against women in fighting forces is not uncommon, and women who have been abducted are especially at risk as they are seen as commodities to be used and traded. Women who provide sexual services to commanders would be categorized as dependents[254].

The conflict in Sierra Leone witnessed a large number of women in Sierra Leone compared to other African countries. During the course of the Sierra Leone war (1991–2002), it is estimated that between ten and thirty per cent of all fighters were female[255]. Women fought alongside men but were not leaders in the forces. Some of these female combatants were abducted by government forces, opposition forces, civil defence forces, irregular armed groups and armed individuals[256]. Some women admit they joined armed groups at their own will[257], however, large numbers were abducted into combat and/or forced to become sexual

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[252] Mazurana and McKay, Where are the Girls? pp 16 - 21
[253] Farr V. "A Gendered Analysis of International Agreements on Light Weapons", p 21
[254] McKay Susan. Op Cit. 2005, p 389
[255] Richards, Op Cit. 1996 p 89; McKay and Mazurana, Op Cit 2004 p 92
[256] John Sweeney, "Sierra Leone: Boys Taught to Torture and Maim" in Daily Mail and Guardian, 22 May 2000, Johannesburg, SA, 2000 p 2
[257] Rachel Brett and Irma Specht, Op Cit. pp 97, 99

and domestic slaves[258]. Thus, female combatants recruitment took the form of both abduction and volunteering; civilians were forced to become combatants and thus also perpetrators. From the testimonies, a female child combatant justified her participation in the army because: 'I was defending my country[259]'. Other female combatants joined the rebels for instrumental (survival) reasons because 'they offered them items, and their regular men did nothing for them[260]'.

Furthermore, the armed conflict continued with rife abuses, in particular women abuse, where girls and women were forced to be bush wives, into domestic servitude or forced labour that involved forced sexual activity[261]. Further, some of these women were merely girls (as young as ten or eleven), and girls and women of varying ages had become mothers to children of rebel combatants that had enslaved them. The instance of sexual abuse, rape and unwanted pregnancy results in a heightened need for programs specifically for women and their experiences. It was estimated that approximately 50,000 women were raped during the war in Sierra Leone. During the rebel war, women bore the brunt of the atrocities committed. Where men died in war as valiant combatants, women were raped and made to suffer multiple indignities. Their bodies were used as weapons of war to break families and communities. The sexual assaults in Sierra Leone were divided into two major categories: gang rape and forced sexual relationships with so-called "bush husbands". The militia or rebels did not only recruit men through kidnapping, but also women. The abduction of the women from their homes often coincided with that of multiple gang rapes[262]. Sexual violation and enslavement of women was used as a primary means for intimidation and getting the services needed for survival in the bush.

During the fighting, the experience of women and girls in the fighting forces was complex. Some girls and women managed to escape within days or months after their capture, while others stayed with their captors for up to ten years. Their participation and experience has lead to post-traumatic stress disorder in many communities. The violation of human rights

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[258] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls? p 23
[259] Peters and Richards, Op Cit. p 191
[260] *Loc Cit.*
[261] Janie Hampton ed., Internally Displaced People, Earthscan Publications, 1998, pp 53-55
[262] Chris Coulter, Op Cit.

raised many questions within Sierra Leone on the rationale behind the war[263]. Some have argued that women are more easily recruited to revolutionary movements because of their subordinate position in society[264]. Women may see an opportunity to fight two struggles at the time: one against an occupying force, another against traditional structures keeping them down.

[263] Human Rights Watch Memorandum, Political Considerations in Sentence Mitigation for Serious Violations of the Laws of War before International Criminal Tribunals, http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/ij/sierraleone0308/ accessed 11th August 2008

[264] Urdang Stephanie, Fighting Two Colonialisms: Women in Guinea-Bissau. New York & London: Monthly Review Press. 1979 p 124

CHAPTER THREE

DDR in Sierra Leone

The following chapter analytically case-studies the implementation of the DDR process within the framework of the peace process in Sierra Leone. This will include a presentation of the political environment, the role of the UN and the setup of Sierra Leone's DDR process. The experience of Sierra Leone demonstrates a mixture of success and failure of DDR efforts and the prospects for future endeavours to achieve long-term development.

The challenges vary, ranging from the design to the implementation stages. Within the domains of design and implementation, multiple factors that generate difficulties are usually at play, and these also cover a broad spectrum that includes lack of expertise, poor funding, and weak political commitment to achieve their goals.

Planning of the DDR Process in Sierra Leone

In 1995, the former UN Secretary, Boutros Boutros-Ghali called for demobilization and reintegration in Sierra Leone[265] and a DDR process was written into the terms of the 1996 peace agreement. The main aim of the DDR process in Sierra Leone was to assist the government in stabilizing and ensuring peace in the country. Hence the DDR process was implemented by the UN and various other role players such as the government of Sierra Leone with the support of ECOWAS and the UNDP. The process was funded and implemented as a joint project by the Sierra Leonean government, the UNAMSIL, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other institutions[266]. In light of a cease-fire in 1996, the Government of Sierra Leone created a Ministry for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, which would subsequently become the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR)[267]. Its main aim was to provide short-term security so that the process would be sustainable over time. The program ended abruptly with the 1997 coup, mentioned earlier in

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[265] Agence France Press, Boutros-Ghali calls for democracy in Sierra Leone ahead of trip. November 24 1995, http://www.stanford.edu/~jweinst/files/HW_DDR_CHAPTER.pdf, accessed 19th October 2008

[266] UNAMSIL DDR Coordination Section, The DDR process in Sierra Leone: lessons learned 2003p 5

[267] Evenson E. M. Op Cit. p 735

this report. In July 1998 the department in charge of the DDR was reorganised as the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR). To qualify for entry to the DDR process, each ex-combatant was required to present a weapon at any of the official reception centres across the country in order to 'disarm' and receive financial and educational benefits. As a prerequisite for participation in the process, every candidate was required to respond to questions and to disassemble and reassemble a gun, normally an AK-47. The DDR process provided facilities which included healthcare services, vocational training (such as tailoring, carpentry and masonry), apprenticeship, formal education, and job placement[268]. The DDR processes entailed the establishment of 27 disarmament centres and another 10 demobilization centres throughout Sierra Leone. The DDR was financed by a Trust Fund set up by the World Bank in agreement with donor countries.

The DDR process in Sierra Leone commenced in 1997. The newly returned government of Sierra Leone took the initiative to design a comprehensive DDR process through the NCDDR[269]. This arranged for a ceasefire, the disbandment of the army and the creation of a new one, and the transformation of the RUF into a democratic political party. The willingness of rebels of RUF leader Foday Sankoh and AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma to lay down their arms was in question as they were seen as key to the DDR process. The situation was complicated in December 1998; the rebels began an offensive to retake Freetown and in January 1999 overran most of the city, when the West Side Boys – a new splinter group from the RUF/AFRC front – took more hostages. The immediate objective of the process was to assist all combatants in laying down their arms and to reintegrate them into their respective communities. The ultimate goal was to support the national strategy for peace that includes

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[268] Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, www.child soldiers.org/childsoldiers/CSC_AG_Forum_case_study_June_2006_Sierra_Leone_RUF.pdf accessed 28th July, 2008

[269] Thokozani Thusi and Sarah Meek, "Disarmament and Demobilisation," in Sierra Leone: Building the Road to Recovery, Institute for Security Studies Monograph No 80, March 2003. http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Monographs/No80/Chap1.html, accessed 28th October, 2008

the consolidation of the political and security process, which forms the basis for a viable post-war national recovery program[270].

To support DDR in Sierra Leone, the UN agreed to establish the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) by UNSC resolution 1181 of 13 July 1998 with a disarmament monitoring force of 70 military observers for an initial period of six months. The success came through United Nations Security Council Resolution 1270 providing for a strong peacekeeping force with a Chapter VII mandate to protect civilians against rebel atrocities, and to implement the DDR process[271]. In 1999 Resolution 1270 decided to establish UNAMSIL, mandating the mission to ensure that conflict would not be renewed and that the components of a lasting peace, notably disarmament and demobilisation, would be affected[272]. Hence the main objectives of UNAMSIL were to assist the Government of Sierra Leone and in particular in the DDR process[273]:

- to extend its authority, restore law and order and stabilize the situation progressively throughout the entire country
- in the promotion of a political process which should lead to a renewed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.
- in the holding, in due course, of free and fair elections.

The resolution further stressed the urgent need for resources to finance the DDR process, and specifically called upon all member states to contribute generously to the multi-donor trust fund established by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The World Bank set up the Multi-Donor Trust Fund to facilitate broad donor support to the DDR program in Sierra Leone, which accounted for roughly fifty percent of the overall resources invested in the DDR activities[274]. Other international institutions such as regional forces

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[270] Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR), "The DDR Programme: Status and Strategies for Completion," Submitted to Consultative Group Meeting, Paris, 13-14 November 2002, 5 November 2002, p 4

[271] UNAMSIL DDR Coordination Section, The DDR process in Sierra Leone: lessons learned 2003 p 1-29

[272] *Loc Cit.*

[273] *ibid*

[274] The World Bank, Implementation Completion Report on a Credit in the Amount of US$ 25.0 Million to the Republic of Sierra Leone for a Community Reintegration & Rehabilitation, 22 December 2003, p 5

(ECOMOG) and donor governments such as the United Kingdom (UK) through its Department for International Development (DfID)[275] were highly commended on their important role in supporting the restoration of peace and security in Sierra Leone,

The initial period after the signing of the Lomé Accord in 1999 was a bumpy one, with progress followed by disappointment by the RUF[276]. The RUF clearly was not committed to the agreement, maintained their terrifying operations at targeting civilians and over half a million people fled the country[277]. In October, 1999 the UN Security Council agreed to establish a peace-keeping force but they were slow to deploy and their mandate was limited. However, in 2000, resolution 289 reinforced the previous resolution by calling upon the parties and all others involved in taking steps to ensure that the DDR process was fully implemented throughout the country. The mandate was also being revised to include the provision of security at all sites of the DDR process and to guard and destruct all military equipment collected. This process approved an initial force of 6,000 peacekeepers[278] and was expanded in February 2000 when a further resolution, 1289, gave UNAMSIL a more robust mandate under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. To accompany this authorised strength, UNAMSIL was increased to 11,100 included 260 military observers (UNMOs)[279]. UNAMSIL's mandate under Resolution 1270 of October 1999 includes, among other things, helping the parties involved in the Lomé Peace Agreement with the agreement's implementation, establishing bases in key centres around the country, helping the Sierra Leone government to implement the DDR plan provided for in the Peace Agreement and monitoring the Ceasefire signed on 19 May 1999.

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[275] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls?, p 98

[276] Desmond Molloy, The Gender Perspective as a Deterrent to Spoilers: The Sierra Leone Experience Conflict Trends, Issue No. 2, ACCORD,Special Edition on Peacekeeping, 2004 http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/Peacekeeping/ACCORD04MolloygenderpkSL.pdf, accessed 27th October, 2008

[277] Elagub O. Y., "The Special Court for Sierra Leone: Some Constraints." International Journal of Human Rights Vol. 8 No. 3 2004 p 250

[278] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1270 22 October 1999, http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1999/sc99.htm accessed 29th July 2008

[279] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1289 (2000), 7 February 2000, http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/283/50/PDF/N0028350.pdf?OpenElement; accessed 29th July 2008

Article IV of "The Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF of Sierra Leone" establishes the NCDDR. Article XXVII, paragraph 2 states,

> Given that women have been particularly victimized during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potentials in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes, to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone[280].

Thus female ex-combatants were given the tools (both material and, to a lesser extent, psychological) to play an integral part in post-conflict, civilian life. Article XXVIII mandates the NCDRR to, in support of the International Community; provide appropriate financial and technical resources for post-war rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. It further specifies that special attention shall be given to women in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes and that particular attention shall also be given to the issue of child combatants by addressing the special needs of these children in the DDR processes. For the rehabilitation of war victims, the Government with the support of the International Community, shall design and implement a programme to be financed by special fund. The article XXX of the Lomé Peace Accord on child combatants, calls on the international community, UNICEF and others to pay particular attention to the issue of child combatants and address their special needs[281]. This agreement stated that:

> The Government shall accord particular attention to the issue of child combatants. It shall, accordingly, mobilise resources, both within the country and from the International Community … to address the special needs of these children in the existing disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes[282].

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[280] Lomé Peace Agreement, 1999 Article XXVII, para 2
[281] Williamson, John. "The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Child Soldiers: Social and Psychological Transformation in Sierra Leone." Intervention 4, No. 3 2006 p 187
[282] Lomé Peace Accord: Article XXX - Role of UN Peacekeeping in DDR". Report of the Secretary General to UNSC (United Nations Security Council) 11/2/00

It was agreed in the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord that more attention should be paid to child combatants than adult combatants. DDR was aimed at disarming, demobilising and assisting them to become productive members of their communities[283].

Implementing DDR: The Sierra Leone Case

Since the occurrence of war in Sierra Leone, the international community, particularly the UN, has played a key role in sustaining the peace agreement. From 1998 and 2002, the focus was on the DDR process.

Phases of DDR

This section will focus on the implementation of three phases of the DDR process in Sierra Leone from 1998 to 2000. This section gives an overview of the main areas to include in a situation analysis and planning for DDR. Specific issues relating to the situation of female ex-combatants are also discussed here. The DDR involved a multiplicity of actors from government, rebels, UN, and the NCDDR and to NGOs. The process was designed into three phases of that forms part of a transition from war to peace, ideally, ending in successful, sustained social and economic reintegration of the ex-combatants into society[284]. However, this process was associated with setbacks such as a coup d'état, initial non-compliance with peace agreements, and programme restructuring. Despite the setbacks, the peace process continued to be successfully implemented all over the country. However, one –of the most critical issues related to Sierra Leone DDR was the number of female ex-combatants, as low. Their exclusion from DDR process left them unable to provide for themselves or their children. This was because of the way the DDR process was implemented rather than its design process.

During the DDR process, individuals and groups presented themselves to UNAMSIL disarmament posts and surrendered their weapons and military clothing. Each was provided with an identification card. This card later served as proof of eligibility for services provided

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[283] Mazurana and McKay, Where are the Girls? p 98

[284] Fusato Massimo Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants," Beyond Intractibility, July 2003, pp 1-2; Bradley, Sean, Philippe Maughan, and Massimo Fusato. "Sierra Leone: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)." Findings: Africa Region http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ findings/infobeng/infob81.pdf No. 81 (2002). accessed 24th July 2008

under the DDR. Among others, its objectives were to collect, register, disable and destroy all conventional weapons and munitions retrieved from combatants. It restarted in August 1998 with Phase I, which lasted until July 1999 when the Lomé Peace Accord was signed by the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. However, Sankoh showed no interest in state-building and rather concentrated on controlling diamond resources with continuing associated violence. Plans to start Phase II failed due to lack of security and logistics; Phases I and II of the DDR process required the voluntary surrender of a conventional weapons[285]. Phase I was conducted by the West African peacekeeping mission known as ECOMOG and the NCDDR. The Lomé Accord formally established the framework for the remaining DDR phases. Phase II was conducted by the UN Observer Mission to Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). Phase II began in earnest with a symbolic ceremony in October 1999. It ended in April 2000 with the resumption of violence. This created an "interim phase" lasting until May 2001. In May 2001, Phase III, hailed as "the final and most comprehensive phase[286]" commenced. Phase III was intended to encourage female combatants to register, as their turnout in Phases I and II was unreasonably low and the third and last phase was done jointly by the UNAMSIL and the NCDDR. Both phases I and II were disrupted by the resumption of hostilities which yielded insecurity and rearmament. As the RUF were not willing to enter the DDR process, this contributed the mission to be slow and vulnerable. In addition UNDP also played a pivotal role in the third and final phase of DDR. Women and children in Sierra Leone were the victims as well as perpetrators in the war. Therefore they had to be involved practically in the DDR as a way to protect them. Following the Lomé Peace Accord of 1999, instability and rampant violence continued to stain the land. The RUF, clearly not committed to the agreement, maintained their terrifying operations targeting civilians as over half a million people fled the country[287]. In May 2000, UNAMSIL became the target for further attacks; over 500 UN peacekeepers were taken as hostages by RUF rebels[288]. It was this event that resulted in the arrival of Indian troops in Sierra Leone, further military action and the slow release of the remaining peacekeepers from the RUF captors. The prolonged unrest resulted in the Sierra Leone government's request for a Special Court to be convened in 2002. Hence

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[285] *Loc Cit.*
[286] UNICEF, "From Conflict to Hope: Children in Sierra Leone's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme," New York: United Nations Children's Fund, 2004, p 2
[287] Elagub O. Y. "The Special Court for Sierra Leone: Some Constraints." International Journal of Human Rights Vol. 8 No. 3 2004 p 250
[288] Evenson E.M. Op Cit. p.738

the Special Court was to provide the means in the reestablishment of the rule of law and subsequent notions of security and trust.

The DDR process was seen as the key element "to assist the government in stabilising the region and ensuring peace within the nation" and "to disarm combatants and reintegrate them back into society to ensure peace and development of the nation[289]". However, the first sustained efforts to demobilize fighters began only in 1998. Kabbah's government led this process after it was returned to power by the Nigerians[290]. The UN Military Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) was deployed to assist in the disarmament process. Unfortunately, this phase of DDR was short-lived because DDR provisions of the Conakry treaty, the controlling peace agreement were never implemented and hostilities resumed[291]. Likewise, the Lomé Peace Accord signed in 1999 between the Government of Sierra Leone and combatants of the RUF failed because disarmament and demobilization issues were treated in a cursory manner, and neglected until very late in the negotiation process[292]. Phase I was aborted due to the escalation of fighting in late 1998 and early 1999. The process was interrupted following the deterioration of the security situation and a rebel attack on Freetown on January 6, 1999. Phase II of the process was reactivated and implemented within the framework of the Lomé Peace Accord in 1999 after the Lome´ Accord was signed and it continued until 2000 when the war broke out a fresh.

Although, demobilization continued during negotiations, the bulk of demobilization took place after the UNAMSIL was beefed up following the British intervention in 2001 and 2002. Despite a truce, the process was halted in May 2000 by the outbreak of hostilities among the fighting forces and UNAMSIL was unable to disarm Sierra Leonean ex-combatants since

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[289] UNDDR, Country Programme Sierra Leone. 2007, http://www.unddr.org/countryprogrammes.php?c=60, accessed 12th October, 2008

[290] Molloy Desmond. The DDR process in Sierra Leone: An overview and lessons learned. Freetown, Sierra Leone: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. 2004: Molloy, Desmond. 'The gender perspective as a deterrent to spoilers: The Sierra Leone experience.' Conflict Trends, No.2 2004, pp. 16–19

[291] "UNAMSIL: A Peacekeeping Success: Lessons Learned," (Washington, D.C.: Refugees International, 2002; http://www.refugees international.org/content/publication/detail/3050; accessed 15th September 2008

[292] *Loc Cit.*

stolen weapons led to the collapse of the peace process[293]. The situation continued until two cease-fire agreements were negotiated a year later. Following the establishment of a Joint Committee on DDR in April 2001, Phase III was convened[294]. After expressing satisfaction with the holding of the cease-fire, the government, the RUF and UNAMSIL agreed for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to recommence immediately[295]. Phase III expands areas and was spread across all twelve districts of the country. In the process of DDR as a proof of participation, they were to present ammunition or weapons[296]. Adults received an identity card upon disarmament for tracking eligibility and receipt of benefits[297]. Ex-combatants residing in the camp were provided with cooked food, shelter and sanitary facilities. In the later years of DDR, as donors decided to fast-track DDR, the camps were abolished and ex-combatants were sent straight into society[298]. Disarmament occurred at 'reception' centres, mostly a sports field or any other public place designated for this activity and consisted of assembly, interviews, weapons collection, eligibility certification, transportation to demobilisation centres and the provision of civilian clothing. This was carried out by UNAMSIL. The demobilization phase included of a number of activities inside the DDR camp – an explanation of the DDR process, medical checkups, quick orientation programmes for job hunting, awareness raising on reconciliation and homecoming, education on sexual and reproductive health, psychosocial counselling, civic education and recreational activities. The demobilization was administered by NCDDR. The reintegration process was administered by NCDDR primarily focused at the economic dimension. The reintegration was presented by various agencies in the camps and ex-combatants were free to choose from four options:

a) the receipt of tools and seeds for agricultural work,
b) manual labour in return for salary and/or food,
c) enrolment in formal education, or

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[293] *ibid*
[294] *Ibid.,* The Joint Committee on DDR comprising representatives of the government, the RUF and UNAMSIL met on a monthly basis to discuss issues.
[295] The program was halted since May 2000 by the outbreak of hostilities among the fighting forces.
[296] Thokozani Thusi and Sarah Meek, Sierra Leone Building the Road to Recovery, Disarmament And Demobilisation, Monograph No 80, March 2003 p 27
[297] Peters K. Footpaths to Reintegration: Armed Conflict, Youth and the Rural Crisis in Sierra Leone. PhD thesis at Wageningen University 2006 p 120
[298] *ibid* p 118

d) Vocational training in carpentry, tailoring, garage mechanics, driving, cloth dying, hairdressing and other artisan work[299]

During the DDR process for female ex-combatants the process was entirely different. The DDR processes for ex-combatants children were hosted in Interim Care Centres (ICCs). The ICCs provided food, shelter, sensitisation programmes and some form of schooling while efforts were made to trace and reunite families. In line with the Cape Town Principles (CTP), the formal policy was that children formerly associated with the fighting forces did not need to hand in a weapon or prove their ability to assemble and handle a gun in order to enrol for DDR benefits. However, in practice the ability to handle a gun was often used as an eligibility criterion were left out, because they served as spies, cooks, porters or sex slaves rather than as fighters. Many girl ex-combatants were not eligible to access these facilities.

Despite a difficult working situation, at the end DDR was a complement to the peace agreement in ensuring that ex-combatants did not return to conflict, although large numbers of female ex-combatant were left out of the process. The ability of female ex-combatants to hand over a weapon or ammunition was the key eligibility criterion for the DDR process. Although this might have made some sense to the officials, it did not do justice to female ex-combatants who were affiliated with the armed factions. It discriminated female ex-combatants who did not have weapons and many of them did not carry weapons as they were abducted for sexual reasons or they worked as cooks[300].As a result large numbers of female ex-combatants were deprived the opportunity to start a new life.

From October, 1998 to January 2002 the disarmament phase was reported to have collected a total of 42,300 weapons and approximately 1.2 million rounds of ammunition; this disarmament is said to have resulted in 72,490 demobilized combatants and enrolled 56,000 in reintegration activities[301]. It concludes that the AFRC, CDF and RUF were successfully disarmed, demobilised, and reintegrated into society. The social and economic reintegration process officially commenced in January 2000 but on a rather limited basis. Demobilization

[299] UNDDR 2007
[300] Mazurana and Carlson, From Combat to Community,
[301] Thokozani and Meek, Op Cit. p 25

processes in camps were completed by February 2002. By the end of 2001 UNAMSIL had taken control of the country and on 18 January 2002 the DDR process ended[302] paving the way for a stable post-war political order. The NCDDR, the government of Sierra Leone, the RUF and UNAMSIL played a major role in ensuring its success; there were various obstacles that needed to be addressed. However, from February 2004 the process was extended but in progress of further developing a safe exit strategy to ensure that the jobs and relationships of ex-combatants were adequately stable for reintegration was sustainable[303].

DDR for female child ex-combatants

The 1999 Lomé Peace Accord mentioned the need to include children and girl child combatants in the DDR. The DDR process was important for girl child ex-combatants, as many of the ex-combatants were kidnapped as children and physically branded with the name of their kidnapping troop. Special provisions for children were in two streams of the DDR; one for children under eighteen and another for those above eighteen years and older. Furthermore, the Security Council Resolution 1314 stresses the importance of providing for the demobilisation and reintegration of children involved in fighting forces[304]'. According to the CTP adopted in 1997, a child soldier includes combatants and non-combatants alike. Child protection has been one of the central issues raised by the international community in resolving the conflict in Sierra Leone. For instance, in the case of Sierra Leone, child protection advisers were deployed in UNAMSIL to "ensure that the rights, protection and well-being of all children area priority throughout the peacekeeping process, the consolidation of peace and the rebuilding of the war-affected country[305]".

It was from this time that former child combatants were explicitly and internationally given particular attention in peace agreement. In many cases, the DDR process targeted adult combatants. But in Sierra Leone many fighters were under eighteen hence were categorized

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[302] National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (Executive Secretariate).The DDR program: Status and strategies for completion. Government of Sierra Leone. 2002

[303] NCDDR, Op Cit. 2004

[304] UN Security Council (2000c) UN Security Council Resolution 1314(2000) on Children and Armed Conflict (11 August 2000). www.un.org/Docs/scres/2000/res1314e.pdf, accessed 29th October, 2008

[305] Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, "Child Protection Advisers http://www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/, accessed 12th September 2008

as child combatants. The DDR process for former child combatants was implemented by a different set of organisations. Though NCDDR played an administrative role, the UNICEF and other NGO partners had the operational lead known as Child Protection Agencies. For family reunification, the Ministry of Social Welfare collaborated with UNICEF and its NGO partners. This was the first DDR of child combatants which offered them a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful life as civilian after their participation in the armed conflict. It was recognised that the major challenge was to address child combatants as the key to strengthen peace in Sierra Leone. It was seen that failure to prioritise child combatants in the conflict would perpetuate more conflicts thus the DDR process was the only solution that could offer support to child combatants who were having difficulties into re-establishing themselves in civilians life. Sierra Leone was one of the two first Peacekeeping Missions to introduce Child Protection Advisors[306]. The mandate was to ensure the rights and protections of all children are given a high priority throughout the peacekeeping process. The priority was to give reintegrated children access to basic services, advocacy with donors for sustained reintegration support and others [307].

Furthermore, as part of the DDR process, to ensure successful reintegration of child combatants, structures such as Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) and Children's Councils were set up, to incorporate them into their local communities. The Children's Councils were set up as places where children could come together and discuss their problems and challenges facing them as well as learning their rights[308].

Besides, DDR aimed at enabling demobilised child combatants access formal education since many of these children had no opportunity to attend school during the war. Hence, two programmes were established by UNICEF and other child protection agencies; the Community Rapid Education Programme (CREP) and Community Education Investments Programme (CEIP) were open to groups under fifteen years of age for war-affected children to return to school. The CEIP programme covered the school fees for demobilised child

[306] The other country is the Democratic Republic of Congo.(DRC)
[307] UN General Assembly Security Council. A/55/163 – S/2000/712. (19/07/00). www.unicef.org/wcaro/WCARO_SL_Pub_LesLearntChildSoldiers.pdf accessed 29th July 2008
[308] UNICEF, "From Conflict to Hope: Children in Sierra Leone's Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme," UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2004, pp 36-37

combatants and provided a standard package of material assistance in support of education efforts to schools that accepted demobilised child combatants. This created a major encouragement for communities and schools to acknowledge and to give former child combatants the feeling that they were bringing something positive back to their families and communities. In the end the CEIP helped to prevent dislike and stigmatisation of child combatants.

Furthermore, as an alternative to the DDR process, the Training and Employment Program (TEP) was developed for child combatants aged over fifteen and less than eighteen years of age to provide training and skills. By the end of the programme in 2003, it was claimed an estimated 2658 former child combatants were provided with skills training[309]. Other NGOs like Forum For African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Sierra Leone Association for Women's Welfare (SLAWW), Women's Movement for Peace (WMP), Mothers Against Military Advancement in Sierra Leone (MAMAS) developed services to help female child combatants in particular who were victims in the conflict.

In Sierra Leone, the traditional healing and reconciliation mechanisms were used to aid the reintegration of child combatants too. This traditional cleansing has greatly facilitated the acceptance and reintegration of former child combatants. For instance, in Sierra Leone ethnic groups such as the Mendes, Temnes and limbas resorted to 'secret rituals' to cleanse or purify child ex-combatants. It is however reported that there were few healing or cleansing rituals to further reintegration of female child combatants[310]. It was noted that community-cleansing rituals helped children to successfully reintegrate into their communities. Rituals were said to provide the children with a feeling of acceptance, importance and opportunity to begin a fresh following the scourge of war. In addition a TRC and a Special Court process helped the success of the DDR process. Reconciliation mechanisms aided forgiveness for atrocities committed by child combatants.

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[309] The Impact of Conflict on Women and Girls in West and Central Africa and the UNICEF response,http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:mTkyakyhJvwJ:www.unicef.org/publications/files/Impact_final.pdf+TRC+report,+para.+465.&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=4&client=firefox-a accessed 1st August 2008,

[310] Mazurana and Carlson, From Combat to Community

In Sierra Leone, UNICEF has a child protection programme, which focuses on providing protection and special care for the recovery and reintegration of girl child combatants. These programs combined classroom and vocational training with child-care and feeding programming so that girls with infants could attend while their children were near-by in a positive and safe environment. In addition, from 2004 up to 2007 in Freetown, there was an ongoing project which focused on effective community-based reintegration interventions, rebuilding social welfare systems, enhancing national capacity to protect girl child combatants from violence, exploitation and other abuses. One of its ultimate mandates was to provide quality services for girl child victims of violence, abuse, and social exploitation in Bombali, Koindugu, Kono, Kailikun, Kenema and Pejehun districts[311]. By the end of 2005, ninety percent of children were successfully reintegrated with their families, including 1489 girl children and female child combatants who did not go through the DDR process. It also has a project called 'Girls Left Behind project,' which addressed some of the gaps in the reintegration process[312].

Demobilized children under 15 were sent to ICCs under the care of UNICEF and child protection agencies, after which they were reunited with their families or went to foster families, and entered education projects. Those aged fifteen and seventeen could go into NCDRR training and employment programs for up to nine months, at the end of which they received a start-up kit. However, in many cases they were unable to make effective use of their training because of the weakness of the economy, and start-up kits on their own were not enough to start a sustainable business. To that extent the DDR process had not taken economic realities into account and had given insufficient consideration to sustainability[313]. The levels of economic deprivation reportedly were a factor in some Sierra Leone former combatants, including former child combatants, who returned to fighting in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire[314].

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[311] UNICEF child protection program http://www.dacoorg/ encyclopedia/4_part/4_2/icef_child_protection.pdf, accessed 30th September 2008
[312] *Loc Cit.*
[313] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, http://www.trcsierraleone.org/pdf/kids.pdf, accessed 12th October, 2008
[314] Human Rights Watch (HRW), Youth, Poverty and Blood: The Lethal Legacy of West Africa's Regional Warriors, March 2005 note 3

The 2005 report by the Save the Children Fund emphasized that:

> DDR have had less success with female child combatants because females are regularly met with censure and rejection. They are caught in a no-man's land where they are trapped between recrimination from the armed group if they leave and from the community if they return home[315].

According to the report, many girls are "too scared to stay and too scared to leave" armed groups and many never have a choice[316]. In addition, the families and communities reject them as "unclean," "immoral," or even as "whores" who have sullied the family's and community's honour. Those girls returning with babies found even greater resentment and isolation in their communities and more problems reintegrating than did their male counterparts[317]. Once the girls were stigmatized as promiscuous and trouble makers, and without a social-support network or livelihood, the cycle of gendered victimization and abuse often continued, as girls who were former child combatants were compelled to turn to the sex trade in order to survive. Without the community's protection and/or international intervention, they may be at greater risk for recruitment by armed groups. Furthermore, girls rarely gain access to formal DDR process. When they do have access to these processes, their priorities and special needs are poorly provided for[318].

At the beginning to the process, in Sierra Leone alone, over 20,000 children were entitled to the DDR process, which included money for three years of school or skills-training fees[319]. In spite of this, at the end of the DDR process it was estimated that the number of girls that went through the DDR was abysmal. It was found that eighty eight percent of girls were denied access to DDR process from 1998 to 2002[320]. But, only four point two percent of girl soldiers

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[315] Save the Children: Forgotten Casualties of War p 12

[316] Cockburn, Cynthia. "The Gendered Dynamics of Armed Conflict and Political Violence". In C. Moser and F. Clark (eds), Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence. New York: Zed Books, 2001 pp 13-29

[317] McKay and Mazurana, Where Are the Girls?

[318] Dyan Mazurana, Women in Armed Opposition Groups in Africa and the Promotion of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, Geneva Call and the Program for the Study of International Organization(s), University of Geneva: Geneva, 2006

[319] Sierra Leone: Return to Freetown, http://www.insightnewstv.com/d49/?gclid=CLX-3Y7xs5gCFQ0gQgod9j6jTw, accessed 12th November, 2008

[320] Statement by Paterson, M., Senior Advisor, Gender Equality Division, CIDA, 'Forum report', Women and Leadership: Voices for Security and Development, Ottawa, 28–29 Nov. 2002, p. 20

in Sierra Leone received the benefits of the DDR process[321]. At the end, only 6,845 child combatants demobilised. The figure representing only half of the estimated number of children involved in conflict which was ninety two percent were boys. Although girls represented thirty per cent of children involved in the conflict, only eight percent were girls[322]. Table 2[323] presented the distribution of girls in fighting forces and formal DDR process. The table indicates uneven gender participation and a large gap between the numbers of girls in fighting forces versus the number of girls who go through DDR processes. Guillaume Landry remarks that "demobilisation was not child-friendly […]. Children were thus regarded as second-class combatants who were not targeted with the same level of efforts and services[324]". This was because they were unable to handle a weapon and they were identified as bush wives, cooks and so on. Others were misinformed about the eligibility criteria, feared the societal stigma of ex-combatants and decided not to enrol[325].

Table 2: distribution of girls in fighting and formal DDR process

Force	Estimated Number of Girls in Forces	Number of Girls in DDR	Percentage of Girls in DDR	Percentage of Total Force in DDR
RUF	7,500	436	6	54
AFRC	1,667	41	2	89
SLA	1,167	22	2	-
CDF	1,772	7	0.4	54
Total	12,056	506	N/A	N/A

Source: Mazurana and Carlson, 'From Combat to Community p 20

[321] Mazurana and Carlson, "From Combat to Community:
[322] UNICEF, The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Children Associated with the Fighting Forces: Lessons Learned in Sierra Leone 1998-2002, UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, Emergency Section, June 2005 p x
[323] Mazurana and Carlson, "From Combat to Community: p 20
[324] Landry Guillaume, Op Cit. p 33
[325] Save the Children, No Place Like Home? Children's experiences of reintegration in the Kailahun District of Sierra Leone. London: Save the Children, 2004 p 14

DDR for women

The organization of the DDR process and how it managed female ex-combatants is a prime case study exemplifying how the reconstruction of society's post-conflict depends on the construction of the family unit including a peaceful, nurturing, liberal female.

During the conflict, women experience war as combatants and victims of armed conflict. In Sierra Leone for example, women were very active movers of light weapons[326]. As mentioned above, the Lomé Peace Accord supports the call for a strong role for women in post-conflict reconstruction. Article XXVIII recognised women's victimization during the war and the importance of special attention to their needs during post-conflict reconstruction[327]. The Lomé Accord contained gender-inclusive language; however, Farr notes that the peace agreement made no provisions for females who were combatants or otherwise involved in armed groups[328]. The DDR process was central to determining women's particular needs and priorities in the post war[329]. In Sierra Leone, women combatants were included in DDR process, but were offered training only in gender related activities, such as sewing, hairdressing or clerical work which simply perpetuated gender discrimination. In addition, some of the vocational training was not correlated with economic opportunities hence labour market was unable to absorb people with such professions in large numbers[330]. It can be argued that during implementation of the DDR process, neither NCDDR nor NGOs conducted any labour market assessments to identify more fruitful forms of future employment for ex-combatants. Hence the DDR process needed to expand and strengthen income-generating activities and vocational training based on market research to match ex-combatants aspirations with realistic economic prospects.

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[326] Mansaray Binta Women Against Weapons: A leading Role for Women in Disarmament." In A Ayissi and R.E. Poulton, eds., Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Lone. Geneva: UN Institute for Disarmament Research, 2000 p 148

[327] Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Rebel United Front of Sierra Leone, July 7, 1999.

[328] Farr V. "Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Processes: Where Do Women Stand," p 196

[329] IDDRS, Level 5: Cross-cutting Issues 5.10, "Women, gender and DDR"

[330] Humphreys and Weinstein, Op Cit. p 32

In the end of the process, it was revealed that it did not cater for the needs of female ex-combatants. It did not offer similar attention and created further division among combatants. In the end, women constituted six point five per cent of the participants, although a notably higher proportion were believed to have been actual combatants[331].

The invisibility and silence of female ex-combatants in their environments makes it difficult to detect the full extent to which this phenomenon affects them in conflict settings. The exact number of female ex-combatants involved in the fighting forces is unknown as those who have registered in DDR process are very few and do not accurately represent the real number of female combatants. In many cases it is assumed women do not demobilize unless specific benchmarks are made to include them in the process. However, estimates range from thirty percent up to fifty percent for the number of women and girls in various armed factions[332], with others suggesting that there were four to five bush wives for every conventional fighter[333]. Female combatants were largely excluded from the DDR process, failing to benefit from a variety of programmes such as retraining and placement in reintegration process[334] because it simply ignored the key social role they had played within the rebel movement and the way they had negotiated this role. McKay and Mazurana maintain that a girl's reintegration into the community post-conflict appears to be impacted by the pattern of how she was taken into a fighting force, the military role she played and the way in which she returned. As an example, they note that a cohort of "girls abducted and who return to the community together will usually be viewed more favourably than girls who return unaccompanied or remain in a force for an extended period and return with one or more children[335]". Out of the estimated 10,000 women associated with the armed groups in Sierra Leone, only 4,751 of the 72,490 demobilized adult combatants were women[336]. Of the

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[331] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls? pp 100-101

[332] Sanam Anderlini and Dyan Mazurana, "Boys and Girls Who Also Carried Guns: Forgotten in the peace," International Herald Tribune March 12, 2004, www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2007/MacKenzie.pdf, accessed19th October, 2008

[333] Megan MacKenzie, 'Forgotten Warriors: The Reintegration of Girl Soldiers in Sierra Leone', International Studies Association Paper, San Francisco, March 2006 p 17

[334] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2005, www.iansa.org/documents/2005/Bul5English.pdf, accessed 19th October, 2008

[335] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls? p 34-5

[336] Mazurana D, S. McKay, K. Carlson and J. Kasper. Girls in fighting forces and groups: Their recruitment, participation, demobilization, and reintegration. Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology Vol. 8, No. 2 2002 pp 97-123

approximately 75,000 adult combatants disarmed, an estimated 24,000 were females. The lack of empirical data and the failure to act on behalf of female ex-combatants makes it imperative to include them in a more holistic manner in the entire process of DDR. The statistics on female involved in DDR process does not reflected in the number of female combatants who were embroiled in conflicts in Sierra Leone. The number of female ex-combatants who went through the DDR process was as low as twelve percent, while involvement of female combatants in conflicts was as high as forty percent. The inconsistency of the statistics was attributed to two factors. First, there was very little information or follow-up with regard to female ex-combatants. Second, the enrolment of female combatants in a DDR process indicated their involvement as combatants and thus brands them negatively, which has repercussions for their reintegration.

Mazurana explains that one-third of women involved with rebel or government forces had been involved in active combat, while nearly half had weapons training[337]. One of the contributing factors was the eligibility criteria of the process, for example, the 'one person, one weapon' approach almost guaranteed the exclusion of females, especially of the women associated with the fighting forces reported being forced to hand over their guns to their commanders. Follow-up regarding reintegration support for a woman was also poor, with only an estimated five percent of all demobilized women combatants participating in the Stopgap programme[338]. More often, the opportunity to participate in demobilization was not given to them, largely because they were not seen to be fighters or did not have a gun to present[339]. Consequently, they lost benefits that could provide them with opportunities to enrol in school and/or learn marketable skills, thus contributing to their difficult economic circumstances and their insecurity. Efforts were made to provide them with protection and reintegration support, but these were largely outside the official DDR process[340].

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[337]Nicole Itano, Peace Process Often Ignores Female Ex-Soldiers http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/women.htm, 2004 accessed 12th May 2008

[338] Armed violence and poverty in Sierra Leone A case study for the Armed Violence and Poverty Initiative March 2005, Centre for international Cooperation and Security (CICS) http://hei.unige.ch/sas/files/portal/spotlight/country/afr_pdf/africa-sierraleone-2005.pdf, accessed 8th October 2008 - This programme was aimed at facilitating combatants reintegration into their communities, which included some vocational training

[339] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls?

[340]Women's Commission for Refugees Women and Children (WCRWC) Precious Resources' Adolescents in the Reconstruction of Sierra Leone, New York: WCRWC 2002 p 46

It was found that no specific benchmarks were put in place to ensure that female fighters were disarmed. Despite the fact that there were large numbers of women in the fighting forces, there were low turnouts because, it is assumed, most women did not demobilize unless specific measures were made to include them in the process. There was no systematic government effort to trace missing women or to offer them appropriate demobilization and reintegration support. Many female ex-combatants did not take part for fear they would be harassed or stigmatized. Many female ex-combatants also feared being shamed and blamed for being rebel wives. For instance Anita Schroven claims "if female fighters had associated with the DDR this would only have confirmed their already stigmatized relationship with the rebels and further decreased their chances of being well received by their communities[341]". Hence, they choose to hide and lie about their past as soldiers because they perceive the stigma that comes with revealing their true identity as too great a consequence. Stigmatization is especially pertinent to female combatants who were knowingly sexually abused while in the force. Women with children are also reluctant to participate in DDR, fearing that the reintegration camp's atmosphere might not be conducive to small children. Women who have been victims of sexual abuse during combat are also extremely difficult to attract to the DDR process, as rape in many post-conflict societies carries an enormous stigma; for instance that they are no longer virgins. Instead, the majority of female ex-combatants eschew DDR and return directly to live with family and friends. Many women would rather try to forget their trauma and move on than be exposed as the victims of sexual violence[342]. The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children described Sierra Leone's DDR process as "largely gender-blind" and criticized it for "not take into sufficient consideration the varied roles women and girls played among fighting forces and thus… not adequately provide(ing) for their specific DDR-related concerns and rights[343]". UNICEF has

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[341] Anita Schroven Women after War: Gender Mainstreaming and the Social Construction of Identity in the Contemportary Sierra Leone Berlin: Lit Verlag 2005 p 74

[342] International Labour Organization. "Red Shoes: Experiences of Girl-Combatants in Liberia".

[343] Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children-press release, 21 February 2003 http://www.peacewomen.org/news/SierraLeone/newsarchive03/WCRWC.html, accessed 10th October 2008

admitted "DDR processes have consistently failed to attract female combatants…Sierra Leone was no exception[344]".

Despite the fact that women also carry weapons, focused perspective on DDR where only men were considered inherently causes exclusion of female combatants who were mainly categorized as non-combatants. Both women and men acted in so-called "traditional" combatant roles; carrying guns, shooting and killing people, and commanding armed groups. Likewise, both men and women acted in so-called support roles: spying, looting, cooking, and acting as slaves. Instead of post-conflict policies and programs calling women combatants, a variety of identities, categories, and titles were created for them, such as 'camp followers,' 'abductees,' 'sex slaves,' 'domestic slaves,' or 'girls and women associated with the fighting forces' and 'vulnerable groups associated with armed movements'. By assuming that women and girls' only contributions to war were 'natural extensions of their domestic obligations,' they could be excluded from processes aimed at facilitating post-conflict transitions. In Sierra Leone in particular, the gendered assumptions that the DDR policies were male based not only served to exclude women and girls based on the notion that their contributions were 'natural,' but also served to silence accounts of women and girls fulfilling traditional combat roles during the conflict. The DDR process saw the combatants as the perpetrators who needed to be neutralised, not recognising that some were also in fact victims of their fellow perpetrators. Women also face a moral discourse about fighting in war that men escape[345]. Reports have claimed that groups of up to 100 women were lag behind, because the UN was under the impression that men, not women, were the perpetrators of the violence and required demobilisation[346]: the approach denies agency to women outside of a particular construction of the victim role. It assumes women to be caring bystanders who are hurt, wounded and suffer powerlessly.

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[344] UNICEF, The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Children Associated with the Fighting Forces: Lessons Learned in Sierra Leone 1998-2002, UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, Emergency Section, June 2005 p16

[345] Chris Coulter, The Post War Moment: Female Fighters in Sierra Leone, Migration Studies Working Paper Series, No. 22 Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand, 2005 p 16

[346] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls p 101

Challenges and Dilemmas

The road of DDR has been much more rough and complicated than expected for female ex-combatants compared to their male counterparts. From the literature reviewed, a certain bias is observed on the experiences of agencies involved in post-conflict settings. There is a dire need to address the neglected group and issues. How do DDR processes and policies dictate and restrict ex-combatants? What happens to female ex-combatants during the DDR process and how are they received back to their communities? Why was so much attention given to categorizing combatants and non- combatants? Why were female ex-combatants assumed to be as dependants, domestic workers or sex slaves? Why, despite the plurality of roles, were some female combatants not considered to be "real soldiers?" Female ex-combatants being classified as domestic and sex slaves confirm pre-existing notions of what women 'do' during war. By focusing on the domestic and sexual work contributed by females ex-combatants, they confine them in the 'private' realm of war; they may have been associated with a military group but they were not part of the political or public activity of conflict[347]. Thus, the effort that is made to distinguish female combatants from 'real' combatants is a political act designed to depoliticize their roles during the conflict. Vivi Stavrou comments, "When men are not labelling the work of non-combatant women combatants as soldiering, continues the gender discrimination of the division of labour whereby critical work that is essential for survival, is simply considered a natural extension of women's domestic obligations. Hence neither worthy or remuneration nor significant enough for women to qualify for training and livelihoods programs during the conflict and post conflict[348]".

Although the Sierra Leone DDR process was presented as a relative success, it did not pay sufficient attention to the needs of female ex-combatants who played a support role in the army or those that were forced to act as the "wives" and "sex slaves" of army commanders. The lack of sensitivity and awareness about female ex-combatant's actual involvement in and experience of conflict was thus compounded during the DDR processes that largely failed to recognise the particular difficulty of DDR female ex-combatants into communities. In this

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[347] Megan MacKenzie, Reconstructing Women? Post-conflict Security and the Return to "Normal" in Sierra Leone" University of Alberta 2007 pp 9-10

[348] Stavrou Vivi. Breaking the silence: Girls forcibly involved in the armed struggle in Angola. Richmond, Virginia and Ottawa: Christian Children's Fund and Canadian International Development Agency. 2005a p 99

respect female ex-combatants were treated unfairly. These female ex-combatants were not initially included in the design of the process for disarmament, demobilization or the initial stages of reintegration. Further, some of these women were merely girls (as young as ten or eleven), and girls and women of varying ages had become mothers to children of rebel combatants who had enslaved them. After the conflict, many of these female ex-combatants took the opportunity to get away from their "husbands" without receiving demobilization and reintegration assistance. Even those who stayed did not receive assistance, as they were considered the dependants of demobilizing male combatants and not granted individual rights. Hardly any protection and support was available if they opted out or managed to escape these relations. This study found that few efforts were made to provide them with protection and reintegration support, but these relied on the official DDR process[349]. Simon Arthy remarks that while armed groups remained in Sierra Leone, efforts focused almost entirely on disarming and demobilizing the groups, but reintegration activities were generally not well integrated with disarmament and demobilization activities. During the DDR there was eruption of hostilities among the fighting forces that interrupted the process and this meant that many ex-combatants had to wait more than a year to gain access to a reintegration process. Women were only receiving reintegration assistance, putting them at a considerable disadvantage considering they had to wait for men to first go through the disarmament and demobilization[350].

To recognize challenges to the DDR process implementation, this section applies a framework detailed by Joanna Spears in her chapter in "Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements". She highlights an effort to evaluate peace implementation and to search for opportunities to link short-term tasks to longer-term peace

[349] WCRWC Op Cit.
[350] Simon Arthy, Ex-Combatant Reintegration – Vol 1&2; DFID funded Reintegration Activities in Sierra Leone, Reintegration Lesson Learning and Impact Evaluation; and, Vol 3., Key Issues for Policy Makers and Practitioners, Based on Lessons in Sierra Leone, Freetown/London Study commissioned by DFID, 2003 pp 5, 16

building[351]. Spears's framework, developed for relative analysis of the DDR process, has been adapted to bring explanatory power to the noted challenges in Sierra Leone[352].

The case of Sierra Leone also pointed towards the exclusion of female and in some cases problems related to the societal acceptance of ex-combatants. The political impact of how male and female combatants have been categorized has had several interrelated impacts post-conflict. Most important, accounts of the war that help to contradict gendered stereotypes of the roles of men and women during war have effectively been silenced by policies that only respond to cases that confirm stereotypes of peaceful females and chivalrous males[353]. Next, stripping females of their titles as combatants depoliticised their roles during the conflict, distinguished them from 'true' or 'real' combatants, and, in effect, largely excluded them from the benefits of the DDR process[354]. Lastly, identifying males as gun carrying combatants and females as dependants, domestic workers or sex slaves, resulted in a two-stream process of reintegration. The reintegration process for men was securitized, that is; the reintegration of men was framed as a process that was a necessary component of achieving security post-conflict. In contrast, the reintegration of women was largely framed as a process of socialization or 'returning to normalcy. According to McKay, even when gender relations have been challenged during a conflict, women may be marginalized again during the reconstruction process[355]. As Cordula Reimann posits, "the activities and the new experiences of women within armed conflict have social, political and economic consequences for the establishment of a post-conflict environment and the process of peace keeping[356]". Likewise, Elise Barth emphasises the importance of introducing the voices and opinion of women in

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[351] Joanna Spear, "Disarmament and Demobilization," in Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth Cousens, eds., Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2002, pp. 141-182

[352] *ibid*

[353] MacKenzie Megan, Op Cit. p 6

[354] *ibid*

[355] Susan R. McKay, The Psychology of Societal Reconstruction and Peace: A Gendered perspective 1998 p 350

[356] Reimann Cordula, Engendering Conflict Management - Why Gender Does Not Matter! Thoughts from a Theoretical Perspective, Peace Studies Papers. Working paper 2 Fourth Series (January), Bradford: Department of Peace Studies/University of Bradford 2001 p 12

those scenarios, because the lack of women's perspectives results in leaving out important aspects of the conflict which may continue to be uncovered[357].

In terms of the first impact, there is still a great deal of silence about the diversity of women's experiences and roles during the conflict in Sierra Leone. Of all the lessons to be learnt from the testimonies of women who experienced civil conflict in Sierra Leone is that almost all social stereotypes, norms, rules, and structures were violated, destroyed, and invalidated throughout the conflict. The notion that men are natural warriors and combatants and women naturally peaceful and nurturing were totally challenged in the face of this; post-conflict process and policy has largely ignored any 'aberrations' to so-called "typical" roles and experiences for men and women in conflict[358].

Besides, during the DDR process, important critiques were made in particular to female ex-combatants participation[359]. The DDR in Sierra Leone prioritised peace and security concerns first, which resulted in making male combatants the first priority and female actors and gender issues secondary. Female ex-combatants did not receive enough demobilization packages since at times they were without titles, even as armed combatants with men. Demobilized female combatants were not informed or were excluded from encampment of ex-combatants and ended up in seclusion [360]. There are many reasons female ex-combatants did not demobilize through the DDR process in Sierra Leone. First, the DDR process was narrowly targeted and adopted a narrow definition and demanding procedures of an ex-combatant. The Lomé Accord did not define the term 'combatant'. Eligibility criteria for accessing DDR changed across the three phases. To access DDR in Phases I and II, combatants had to be over eighteen and had to provide a weapon at a DDR reception centre. The weapons requirement was thought to be a "good litmus test" to establish individuals'

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[357] Barth Elise, Peace as disappointment. The reintegration female soldiers in post conflict societies: A comparative study from Africa, 2003 http://www.peacewomen.org./resources/DDR/AfricaBarth.html, accessed 12th November, 2008

[358] MacKenzie Megan Op Cit

[359] Cockburn, Cynthia & Zarkov, Dubravka. 'Introduction" in Cynthia Cockburn and Dubravka Zarkov (eds.) The Postwar Moment. Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping, London: Lawrence & Wishart 2002, pp 441

[360] de Nathalie. Watteville "Addressing Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programs". African Region Working Paper Series. Washington D.C.: the World Bank. 2002 pp 6, 19

participation in armed groups as combatants[361]. Phase III expanded the eligibility criteria. Again the DDR process was more institutional in approach: disbanding military and handing out/cantoning weapons. From this we can see as missing, attempts to look at long term effects of DDR. It allowed for group disarmament, whereby a group of combatants could be demobilised with the presentation of a number of heavy weapons or ammunition. The intention was to increase the ability of women associated with armed groups to participate. As a result the process, traditionally conceived in narrow technical terms ended up encountering difficulties in defining its goals. It has to be emphasized that the DDR was designed and conducted with a heavy emphasis on demilitarization and the collection of weapons. Hence, most female ex-combatants were disqualified because they had no weapons[362].

In Sierra Leone's DDR process, ex-combatants initially had to hand in a weapon in exchange for assistance. In a number of cases, the DDR process did not target women or has only targeted women with weapons, thus excluding women who could not hand in a weapon at disarmament camps, and have not always managed to adequately identify women who were eligible for assistance, including vocational training and stipends, available to their male counterparts. Since many women and girls in support roles were not perceived as combatants, they were largely excluded from assistance[363]. But even if women carry a weapon, they may still find it difficult to prove that they were active combatants. If there is group disarmament women have to rely on male superiors for confirmation of their combatant status and hence eligibility for DDR support. In addition, the eligibility criteria for proving child combatant status were narrow. Girls had to meet one of the four criteria used for all child soldiers: being between the age of seven and eighteen have learned to cock and load a weapon; have been trained in an armed group; and, have spent six months or more in an armed group[364].

Secondly, the DDR process did little to overcome social and cultural problems for women's participation because traditional gender relations are reintroduced and women were expected

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[361] Mazurana and Carlson, From Combat to Community: p 9
[362] Daniel Hoffman 'Violent events as narrative bloc: The disarmament at BO, Sierra Leone' Anthropology Quarterly Vol. 78 No. 2 2005 pp 329-354
[363] WCWRC 2002, Op Cit.
[364] UNICEF, "From Conflict to Hope: Children in Sierra Leone's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme," 2000 p 2

to lapse to more traditional and less visible roles. Women were not seen as real fighters but assumed to have been 'wives' and therefore immediately lost access to the DDR process, including eligibility for reinsertion benefits. Traditionally, women have been considered a "special group" or "vulnerable population[365]". Thirdly, the DDR process has not targeted women in armies since, as female combatants are not directly regarded as a major security threat, was the case in Sierra Leone. This was also complicated by the fact that the overriding rationale behind the DDR process was to increase security by disarming combatants; social objectives were of secondary consideration. Fourthly, when the DDR process was willing to offer support to women who joined (ir)regular armies, they were not easily tracked, as these women disappeared quickly from the scene when the fighting ended. It was noted that female ex-combatants see few benefits in DDR and they feared for being socially stigmatized and ostracized.

The DDR process was poorly planned and implemented. The lack of clear policy, adequate planning and procedural guidelines was a problem. This resulted in responsibility sharing between government institutions and implementing agencies, resulting in huge numbers of female ex-combatants not receiving the necessary attention[366]. John Williamson suggests that the linear implementation of the DDR process contributed to women and girls' exclusion in Sierra Leone[367]. The assumption upon which this plan was based, that "people go home when the fighting ends," demonstrated once again that the DDR planners lacked adequate levels of knowledge and understanding about female combatants in conflict, and regarding the political, economic, and social context underlying the conflict and how that context complicated the peace-building process[368]. In the end, the social exclusion of these individuals was not reduced or ameliorated as a result of decisions taken far from the field. Returning to one's home community is often not possible in post-conflict transitions. Many avoided the process because they did not want to be identified by family or community members as being associated with a rebel group and thus stigmatized. Some also feared that being identified as being part of a rebel fighting force would lead to prosecution or other

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[365] McKay and Mazurana, Where are the Girls?
[366] *ibid* pp 98, 100-101
[367] Williamson John, Op Cit. pp 185-205
[368] Smillie Ian. Relief and Development: The Struggle for Synergy. Occasional Paper No. 33 Providence: Watson Institute for International Studies 1998 p 22

penalties. The stigma of being an ex-combatant who may have committed atrocities against members of his/her own community often acts as a disincentive for many ex-combatants to return home. Female combatants are not easily accepted back into society and often looked upon with fear and suspicion. This was a very central aspect that was supposed to be dealt with in the planning and implementing of the DDR process. The negative attitudes that societies often have towards female ex-combatants, as well as the issue of shame and the threat of stigmatization of these females if they are identified as former fighters must be taken under serious consideration when DDR processes are planned. The UNICEF consultant concluded that fear and shame kept younger females out of the process than criteria related to weapons[369].

Farr points out that the Lomé Peace Agreement of July 1999, which had involved only two women representatives, did not surpass the stereotypical and narrow understanding of women's experience of armed violence[370]. She further argues that women's absence, from the planning through to the implementation stages of the process, had a critical impact on the extent to which women's and girls' particular needs could be anticipated and catered for[371]. During the process, there were also no women in the disarmament sensitization committee, perhaps hinting at the fact that the marginalization of women in the disarmament process also reveals women's relative invisibility on all political levels in Sierra Leone[372]. In addition, all through the reintegration process in Sierra Leone, no female military observer was deployed in the field, which represented a lost opportunity to gain a female perspective on the procedures and practices. One problem was that the reintegration projects were often not adapted to the female fighters' needs. Besides, the group identity and the networks from the war were lost, and many of the women had to struggle alone. This resulted in discrimination and lack of gender analysis in the armed conflicts. Female ex-combatants were not invisible as they were seen as assets and resources to be exploited. They were also invisible to the

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[369] Chris Coulter. "Assessment of the 'Girls Left Behind' Project for Girls and Young Women Who Did Not Enter DDR," draft consultant's report to UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2004, p 37

[370] Farr V. "The importance of a gender perspective to successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes" pp 25 - 36

[371] *ibid*

[372] Mansaray B. 'Women against weapons: a leading role for women in disarmament' in Ayissi, A. and Poulton, R.-E. (eds), Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone, Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2000 p156

government and the international community during the DDR process. In some cases, when DDR are willing to support female ex-combatants, they are unable to trace them, as women tend to quickly disappear from the war. For example, UNICEF Sierra Leone coordinated the DDR for children and has acknowledged that they failed to address the needs of girls. After the conflict, UNICEF set up a program to cater for girls and women who were eligible for the DDR but never went through the process[373].

In many cases DDR initiatives have been criticized for poor performance; even UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that "women combatants are often invisible and their needs are overlooked"[374]. Many females are excluded from official demobilization exercises because of age, gender or function[375]. During the DDR process in Sierra Leone, a narrower definition of DDR was used to educate the community, and as a result a sizeable number of girl child combatants were left out of the process. Furthermore, many commanders have prevented female child combatants from going through DDR for some reasons. For instance the commanders were misled about eligibility for the DDR. In some cases whether or not a child has access to DDR benefits it depended on the commander's definition of "child," "soldier," or "child soldier". For instance, if the government defines "child soldiers" as "combatants", children who serve as cooks, lookouts, porters, and sex slaves are excluded even though they have experienced and are witnesses to conflict[376]. Therefore commanders attempted to prevent the female child combatants in their ranks from going through DDR[377].

The DDR process was influenced by planners who were unaware of the presence and roles of female ex-combatants associated with fighting forces. On the other side, female ex-combatants were reluctant to come forward in the DDR process out of shame or fear of being punished or stigmatized by their own communities and families. There are also criticisms made that the DDR process prioritised peace-building and security concerns, making female

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[373] UNICEF extended the age eligibility for this program to 25 to account for women who were soldiers as girls.
[374] Ernest Harsch, Women: Africa's ignored combatants Gradual progress towards a greater role in DDR, Africa Renewal, October 2005, Vol.19 No.3 p 17
[375] Verhey B. Child Soldiers: Preventing, Demobilizing and Reintegrating 6–7 World Bank Group, Afr. Working Paper Series No. 23, 2001, p 6
[376] *ibid*
[377] Save the Children-UK, Forgotten Casualties of War: Girls in Armed Conflict. Save the Children, London. 2005 p 9

actors and gender issues secondary. Another major issue was in the identification of the beneficiaries of the DDR process. Likewise, during the process, women were often marginalised and treated as "secondary beneficiaries", whether they had guns or not. The assumption that females were victims only, with no role in either the execution of war or the building of peace, consequently limited their access to different forms of benefits provided. It was reported that seventy five per cent of girls and young women maintained that the main challenges to disarming were fear of being arrested and/or executed or shame with regards to their families and communities[378]. Many girls and young women felt they would be insecure in a camp setting and most expressed a wish for secure, single-sex cantonment sites for women.

The instances also reveal an ignorance of the complicated position women occupy on the part of those designing and implementing the DDR process. Initially, the process in Sierra Leone limited its understanding of mobilisation to that of a traditional armaments focus, thus excluding those who did not play a direct combat role, most often women[379]. Secondly, even those women who did play a combat role often had their weapons removed by senior commanders (almost exclusively male) to be redistributed at a profit to men eager to gain the benefits of DDR[380]. Moreover, it was pointed out that "to qualify for the process, the girl or woman had to be accompanied by the male ex-combatant who would vouch she was his 'wife'." This eventually resulted in some men abducting girls to pose as their wives and then abandoning them as soon as they got the money[381].

The reintegration stage received significantly less attention than the first two stages of the DDR process[382]. It was found that, female ex-combatants were ostracised as outcasts from family and communities. In Sierra Leone traditional patriarchal authority was stronger and the state was weak after the war; women had to follow patriarchal orders due to their

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[378] UNICEF, The Impact of conflict on women and girls in West and Central Africa and UNICEF response, p 18
[379] Keen, David, Op Cit p 259
[380] Megan MacKenzie, 'Forgotten Warriors: The Reintegration of Girl Soldiers in Sierra Leone', p 15
[381] McKay and Mazurana Where Are the Girls? p102
[382] *ibid* p 104

subordinate position[383]. Notably in Sierra Leone women appeared to suffer rejection not only as a result of their former association with the armed group, but also because they had been victims of sexual violence. Given the importance placed upon virginity at marriage, girls were often deemed 'unmarriageable' following disclosures of rape. In a society where girls are valued primarily for their future roles as wives and mothers, and where marriage is the best option for obtaining economic security and protection, being 'unmarriageable' often left girls feeling profoundly at risk, both socially and economically.

The DDR process in Sierra Leone did not acknowledge as beneficiaries' female ex-combatants who had performed non-combatant roles and services such as cooking. It was evident that the process went through gender lens and female ex-combatants did not benefit from a variety of processes such as retraining and placement in reintegration process[384]. As a result, female ex-combatants did not receive satisfactory demobilization packages during the process. Demobilized female ex-combatants were not well informed or were excluded from encampment of ex-combatants. Reintegration process was not in sync with the overwhelming economic and social recovery needs of Sierra Leone and of individual families. Livelihood skills acquired through DDR were often irrelevant to the recipients' reality, hindering family reunification and community acceptance processes. The few small-scale training programmes for female ex-combatants reinforced gender images by teaching them sewing and secretarial skills. Lack of gender-sensitive programs and secondary status of gender issues in post-conflict processes prevented women from participating in formal reconstruction processes. Female ex-combatants, especially those who had been associated with armed groups were, excluded from these processes. The percentage of females who formally demobilized is far lower than the number we know were recruited. For example, out of the estimated 10,000 women associated with the armed groups in Sierra Leone, only 4,751 or six point five percent of the demobilized were women[385]. Among the girls in the RUF, only six percent have done

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[383] Nzomo, M., "Gender, Governance and Conflicts in Africa". Dakar: CODESRIA. 2000 http://unpanl.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/CAFRAD/UNPAN010829.pdf, accessed 17th November, 2008

[384] Peace processes, guns and gender: an analysis of practice, policy and potential Summary of meeting Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva, 5 December 2005 p 2

[385] Coulter, Chris, 'The Post-War Moment: Female Fighters in Sierra Leone', Working Paper 22, Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of Witwatersrand, November 2005 p 3

the DDR, while for the CDF and the AFRC, the figures are even lower[386]. It was reported that from an estimated 12,056 girl fighters, only 506 were disarmed or had any access to reintegration benefits[387]. Table 3 indicates that thousands more fighters, particularly female, were not reached by the official process. There question is where were the women and girls? Such a large gender gap calls into question the actual success and design of the process. Estimates of the overall number of women involved in fighting are as high as thirty percent, with others suggesting that there were four to five bush wives for every conventional fighter[388]. According to Mazurana one-third of women involved with rebel or government forces had been involved in active combat, while nearly half had weapons training[389]. However, there were many flaws in Sierra Leone's DDR process that helps to explain why so few females were involved. As mentioned earlier, there was widespread confusion as to whether surrendering a weapon was a prerequisite for DDR. This has been cited as one reason for the failure of the process for female ex-combatants, as many of them in the fighting forces were not armed. There was little funding allocated to female ex-combatants in the DDR process. The invisibility of female combatants seemed to carry on in DDR.

Table 3: NCDDR Gender – Disaggregated Data on entry into DDR

Force	Girls Number	Percent	Women Number	Percent
RUF	436	1.8	3,925	16.1
AFRC	41	.5	530	6.0
SLA	22	No data	No data	No data
CDF	7	.0001	296	0.8
Total	506	No data	No data	No data

Source: Mazurana and Carlson, 'From Combat to Community p 19

It was found that no specific measures were put in place to ensure that female combatants were disarmed. In spite of the fact that there were large numbers of women in the fighting forces, there were low turnouts because, it is believed, most women did not demobilize unless precise measures were made to include them in the process. There was no systematic government effort to trace missing girls or to offer them appropriate demobilization and

[386] McKay and Mazurana, Where Are the Girls? p 100-101
[387] *ibid* p 100
[388] MacKenzie Megan, 'Forgotten Warriors: The Reintegration of Girl Soldiers in Sierra Leone', p 17
[389] Nicole Itano, Peace Process Often Ignores Female Ex-Soldiers http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/women.htm, 2004 accessed 12th August 2008

reintegration support. After the conflict, many of the female ex-combatants took the opportunity to get away from their "bush husbands" without receiving demobilization and reintegration assistance. Even those who stayed did not receive assistance, as they were considered as dependants of the demobilized male combatants and not granted individual rights. Almost not any protection and support was available if they opted out or managed to escape from these relations. This was because most of the process was left for the official of DDR and little efforts was made to provide them with protection and reintegration support[390].

Despite the fact that both men and women carried out a variety of roles during the conflict, women were mainly categorized as non-combatants. Women were also neglected in the DDR processes because they were not acknowledged as combatants or were denigrated as "camp followers", "domestic slave", "sex slaves", or "wives" of rebel commanders[391]. In addition, even international organizations that were involved in the DDR process were reluctant to name women and girls as combatants. A good example was the UNICEF program failed to address the needs of women and girls combatants. Instead the program used the term combatants to refer female combatants as the girls lag behind or girls with fighting forces and girls who were involved with the fighting forces[392]. This makes invisible the fact that they serve a central function during wartime and a challenge during the period of the process. According to Cynthia Enloe, in many cases women were often treated with disrespect as mere camp followers[393]. She remarked on the idea of 'camp followers', in that "focusing exclusively on the much touted craftiness of camp-followers is analytically ... and politically .....risky thus underestimating the explicit need military commanders had for these working women[394]". In Sierra Leone, female combatants were registered as "dependents" or "camp followers" so that they did not benefit from the DDR processes. From other literature it has been revealed that "DDR processes planned and implemented by military officials has resulted in a bias against those the military does not consider 'real combatants' (i.e. men with

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[390] Women's Commission for Refugees Women and Children (WCRWC) Precious Resources' Adolescents in the Reconstruction of Sierra Leone, New York: WCRWC 2002, p 1-4
[391] Mazurana and McKay, Where Are the Girls?
[392] UNICEF, The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Children Associated with the Fighting Forces: Lessons Learned in Sierra Leone 1998-2002, UNICEF West and Central Africa RegionalOffice, Emergency Section, June 2005 p 16-17
[393] Cynthia Enloe, Manoeuvres: The International Politics of Militarising Women's Lives, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp 38-40
[394] *ibid* p 39

guns)[395]". An interviewed ex-combatant said that it was actually the lack of a weapon that excluded them from the demobilisation process[396]. According to the World Bank, the DDR process overwhelmingly focuses on "young men with guns[397]" and has a tendency to overlook or ignore the distinct needs of girl combatants. The one-man, one-gun model of DDR, in which former combatants can trade in their weapons for money and job training, often excludes girls because they never possessed weapons or have already had them taken away, thus disqualifying them from DDR participation[398].

Additionally, female combatants did not disarm. It has been claimed that the military emphasis of DDR has the effect of discriminating against girls. DDR assistance may act as an indicator to the community that the girls used to be part of or involved with armed groups. In Sierra Leone it was noticeable that there was an over-categorization of females as bush wives, camp followers, and sex slaves, which "prevented the establishment of DDR process to address their actual lived experiences[399]". This is also valid of women who tend to be excluded from benefits granted by the DDR process. Likewise important is that provisions of peace agreements need to be fulfilled in practice.

One of the contributing factors was the eligibility criteria of the process. The process limited its understanding of demobilisation thus excluding those who did not play a direct combat role, most often women[400]. Some demobilisation plot had even discriminated against women because they operate on the basis of 'one man, one gun'. For instance, the 'one person, one weapon' approach almost guaranteed the exclusion of females, especially as many of the women and girls associated with the fighting forces reported being forced to hand over their guns to their commanders[401]. Also, CDF were disadvantaged by the weapon criterion because many of them fought with traditional weapons. Many of the weapons used by females in the

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[395] McKay & Mazurana, Where Are the Girls? p114
[396] *ibid*
[397]UNIFEM, United Nations Development Fund for Women Issue brief on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). 2004. http://www.womenwarpeace.org/issues/ddr/ddr.htm, 2004, accessed 27th October 2008
[398] Preston, C. Rehabilitation programs reportedly failing war-affected females. UN Wire. 2004 http://www.unwire.org/UNWire/20040405/449_22484.asp., accessed 27th October, 2008
[399] Mazurana and Carlson, From Combat to Community, p 21
[400] Keen David. Op Cit p 259
[401] Rehn and Sirleaf, Op Cit. p 116; United Nations Op Cit. 2002 p 133

CDF, such as knives and machetes, were not accepted as weapons for entering DDR[402]. Nonetheless, whether or not women had guns, they were left out of the process, and treated as 'secondary beneficiaries[403]. Many women in the CDF were ordered to hand in their weapons prior to demobilization, and then were left behind as their male colleagues were transported to cantonment sites. Carlson and Mazurana state that forty six percent of women surveyed cited not having a weapon as a barrier for entry into the DDR process[404]. Others indicated that their guns were taken away by their commanders and handed to male combatants, while many never possessed guns themselves[405]. In Sierra Leone, for instance, it was found that women who had been members of the RUF but who had not carried weapons received no assistance because they had no gun to turn in. There are many other women involved in combat who, because of the 'possession of arms' criteria for entering into the DDR process, were excluded from the benefits and opportunities of reintegration. According to a testimony, a woman ex-combatant in Sierra Leone said that, "Unless you were a fighter with a weapon to lay down, you were not eligible to join the programme"[406]. Even the women who did play a combat role often had their weapons taken away from them by senior commanders to be redistributed to profit men eager to gain the benefits of DDR[407].

Disinclination to consider the social environment that women returning from conflict face is another reason why women were excluded from the DDR process. The perception that women were not valuable citizens who can contribute constructively to the recovery did not help in understanding the multiple dimensions of women's involvement in fighting forces. This exclusion of women in the DDR process disadvantaged women in post-conflict society and threatened the stability and sustainability of the process from the onset.

Women were both clearly excluded from the DDR process in some circumstances and chose not to participate in others. Both instances reveal an ignorance of the complicated position

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[402] McKay and Mazurana, Where Are the Girls? p 100
[403]Nathalie de Watteville, "Addressing Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programs", Africa Region Working Paper Series Washington, DC. The World Bank, May 2002 p. vii
[404] Mazurana and Carlson, "From Combat to Community." p 3
[405] *ibid*
[406] Women, War, Peace and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), – the key to keeping the peace p 2
[407] MacKenzie Megan, Op Cit, p 15

women occupy on the part of those designing and implementing the DDR process. Nevertheless, female fighters often miss out on DDR benefits, for example because their commanders sideline them or because DDR officers make insufficient efforts to identify and recognise them. Some were forced to remain as others had formed strong bonds with their commanders and claimed to be in love with their captors[408]. It was estimated that some 1,000 girls who were not included in the DDR were living with former combatants[409]. Only about eighteen percent of the girls associated with rebel forces had come forward[410]. However, gendered DDR is more than just tackling this kind of discrimination.

In reality, the DDR process failed to value the gender stereotypes that pushed women from the frontline back into invisibility, denying them their demobilisation process and also failing to consider the fear that women often felt at the prospect of being encamped with their former abusers[411]. This accentuates the inability to make sense of the crossover of the roles of victim and perpetrator those women played[412]. Women, who had volunteered, as well as those who had been abducted, were considered soiled, promiscuous and violent; contravening the norms of respectable female behaviour. The fear of such stigma caused many women not to enrol for the DDR process in the hope that they could bury their indecent past[413].

However, these attitudes made women choose not to go to public places like the DDR camps. It was found from interviews that in some cases, female fighters were told by their bush husbands that the DDR was "not good for women"[414]. It was seen as negative for women to disarm, as it would make it more difficult for them to be accepted back into their communities. Many victims feel that the ex-combatants are being rewarded for their wrongs and that as a result victims are being ignored or neglected. It would make it harder for women

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[408] Twum-Danso, Op Cit.
[409] Twenty-first report of the UN Secretary-General on the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, New York. UN Doc S/2004/228, 19 March 2004 p 6
[410] *ibid*
[411] Mazurana and McKay, Where Are the Girls? p 101
[412] *Ibid.*
[413] MacKenzie Megan, Op Cit, p 17
[414] Chris Coulter, Reconciliation or Revenge: Narratives of Fear and Shame among Female Ex-combatants in Sierra Leone, Department of cultural anthropology and ethnology, Uppsala University, 2006 p 5

to get married, as they were told that no man wanted a 'rebel woman'[415]. This reason made them afraid to come out and many preferred to stay with their bush husbands because they had children with them. Additionally, these women feared the discrimination that they and their children might face once they returned to their original communities. On the other hand, these girls felt trapped, and unable to return to their families and community of origin. It has been revealed that fear and lack of economic alternatives for themselves and their children remains a major reason for girls to remain with their commanders[416]. It was reported that some girls also choose to stay with their "rebel-captor husbands" because they find that "bush marriages" provide them with better security and material comfort than what they experience in their own communities[417]. Similarly in Sierra Leone, rebel commanders reportedly did not permit their troops to demobilize against the wishes of combatants. Social workers on the ground for instance find it difficult to involve girls in the reintegration process due to their relationships with the commanders. It was reported by Caritas Makeni in the North of Sierra Leone, that commanders brainwashed their 'wives' into remaining with them by telling them that they will be stigmatized and rejected once they accepted to go back to their communities because they have a 'rebel pikin' (rebel child) [418]. Furthermore, throughout the reintegration process in Sierra Leone, no female military observer was deployed in the field, which represented a lost opportunity to gain a female perspective on the procedures and practices.

Moreover, a number of female ex-combatants were unwilling to leave the armed groups due to affection formed for members of the rebel group. This phenomenon was evident in Sierra Leone to the extent of rebel leaders expressing the wish to marry these female combatants. Many women did not enter the DDR process because they had no knowledge of the process or felt there was nothing to gain by participating. It appears that their misinterpretation of the process or the lack of information stemmed from inadequate sensitization about the DDR process for female ex-combatants[419].

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[415] *ibid*
[416] Save the Children. No more faded cotton. London: 2005c
[417] Mazurana and McKay, Where Are the Girls?:
[418] Caritas Sierra Leone http://www.cafod.org.uk/where_we_work/africa/sierra_leone, accessed 1st August 2008
[419] Caritas Sierra Leone

Moreover, it has been suggested that one reason many male commanders discouraged girls and women from registering for DDR was that bush husbands wanted to hold on to their bush wives. It would have been in their best interest to keep them, as women's continued domestic work was still necessary[420]. For the reasons above, girls and women fear further discrimination and social exclusion and hence avoided entry into the DDR process. From comparison then, it seemed that combatant men were not eager to share the material benefits of the DDR with female fighters, and it was also seen as culturally inappropriate for women to openly disarm. As a result, both CDF and RUF rebel ex-combatants remain among some of the most disadvantaged groups in terms of employment. There have been complaints that reintegration packages have been too short and directed at the wrong job skills. Defining who is an ex-combatant was a problem and the DDR process did not recognise women's real experiences. Women were not acknowledged and were precluded from receiving the benefits provided to combatants. The complication of getting a better sense of who the ex-combatants are and what their actual situation is, means that more time is needed to plan DDR activities. This needs to include women who have performed non-combat roles and other services such as cooking, sexual acts and others.

From the above, DDR process has failed to work with women and not enough attention has been paid to the challenges faced by women ex-combatants[421]. DDR was largely gender blind and did not take into sufficient consideration the varied roles women and girls played among fighting forces and thus did not adequately provide for their specific DDR process. The stigma attached to women during peacetime; being associated with an armed force or group was huge. The view or fact that a weapon is required for participation in a DDR process left them behind. In some situations, commanders' deliberately held girls back because they were the most desirable sexual partners within the group. They also hid women and girls who had been abducted, for fear of legal and social consequences. Finally the fact that the DDR process was open gendered, was not addressed in Sierra Leone. Large numbers of female ex-combatants struggle for survival and remain rather miserable.

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[420] Brett and Specht, Op Cit. p 99

[421] Jeremy Ginifer, Prioritising Reintegration, in Mark Malan et al., Sierra Leone—Building the Road to Recovery, Monograph 80, Pretoria, Institute of Security Studies, 2003, http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/monographs/No80/content.html. accessed 11th August 2008

In Sierra Leone, girls reported that when they returned home with their 'fatherless babies', they witnessed hatred towards themselves and their babies by their families and communities. They faced a lot of challenges relating to the availability of alternative childcare; consequently they had to carry them around which hampered their ability to concentrate in any skills or educational training. In fact, their babies do not receive any appropriate and adequate nutrition or sufficient health care since the girls themselves lack basic necessities like sleeping mats, blankets, and nets to protect themselves and their babies from malaria and other harsh conditions. Many girls talked of supporting themselves and their babies through prostitution. They would have stayed in their villages with families, but they cannot stand the humiliation of being called 'rebels' and 'sex tools[422]'.

In addition, women are usually ashamed to classify themselves as former fighters due to the consequences of such an admission. In some situations, female combatants have been unwilling to join demobilization and reintegration processes, fearing rejection by their families and communities. Some parents even discourage them from entering reintegration processes in order to avoid feelings of shame in the neighbourhood. During the reintegration, it was found that tracing the families of former child combatants posed various challenges. The fact that local communities would not accept the return of female combatants was the most difficult aspect of DDR. Families tend to reject their daughters because they had been 'tainted' by their abusers and had thus lost all prospects of marriage[423].

Despite the knowledge of this during the reintegration process in Sierra Leone, nothing was done to address it[424]. Judith Gardam and Hilary Charlesworth argue that, the treatment of female ex-combatants by the military institution reflects the subordinate position of women and girls in society generally[425]. Furthermore, some females took the option of going back to their bush husbands after they had been successfully reunified with their families. They submitted that even though their bush husbands had no love to offer, they had comfort and a sense of security. Others felt they could not return to their communities after the war because

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[422] Testimony of some female child soldiers hosted by Children Affected by War (CAW) Freetown April 2006
[423] Twum-Danso, Op Cit.
[424] Judith Gardam & Hilary Charlesworth 'Protection of women in armed conflict' Human rights Quarterly Vol. 22 No. 1, 2000 pp148-166
[425] *Ibid* p 152

people had vowed revenge on them. To them, the fact that they survived the war meant that they had become committed members of the RUF[426]. All these reasons held back the successful reintegration of female combatants in Sierra Leone. In light of these complications, it is necessary to seek new ways of making it more successful like applying the rights-based approach. They were left to find their own way through life, and are suffering triple discrimination as women, ex-combatants and the poor. Those who do survive still find it very difficult to proceed with life in the expected traditional women's roles, which are opposed to the more powerful combat roles they held during the conflict.

Many women lacked the skills and education necessary to fully reintegrate into society[427]. Little funding was allocated for their protection needs that provided for counselling, education or training[428]. Little or no market analysis was done to determine which skills offered the best prospects for employment in different parts of the country. According to the World Bank for demobilized ex-combatants, apprenticeship training and micro enterprises support were the initial methods used to provide skills training to the ex-combatants[429]. As funds became limited, only females who could prove that they knew how to fire a gun were assisted with meagre packages such as a bit of food, water, plastic sheeting for shelter, and sometimes a small, one-time payment and a ride home[430]. Yet given the chaotic life histories of innumerable war-affected ex-combatants, to ignore, undermine, or render invisible their perspectives and needs, and their right to actively participate in post-war societal reconstruction and renewal, is to risk a continuation of disparity, instability and violence. However, after the completion of apprenticeships, little support was provided in finding jobs[431]. For example, one major challenge was addressing youth unemployment as key to strengthening peace in Sierra Leone. Youth unemployment is considered not only as a socio-

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[426] Paul Richards 'Green book millenarians? The Sierra Leone war within the perspective of an anthropology of religion' in N Kastfelt (ed) Religion and African Civil wars 2005 p135

[427] McKay and Mazurana, Op Cit. 2003

[428] Human Rights Watch, "We'll kill you if you cry": Sexual violence in the Sierra Leone conflict, January 2003. www.hrw.org/reports/2003/sierraleone/sierleon0103.pdf accessed 1st August 2008

[429] World Bank, Child Soldiers: Prevention, Demobilization and Reintegration, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit Social Development Department, Dissemination Notes, 2002. No. 3 http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRANETSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/214578-1111661180807/20486529/CPRnotes3-Draft2-web.pdf, accessed 27th July 2008

[430] Save the Children Op Cit.

[431] United Nations (UN) DDR Resource Centre – Sierra Leone page http://www.unddr.org/countryprogrammes.php accessed 31st July 2008

economic issue but also as a political and security issue, posing a serious obstacle to peace, security and development in Sierra Leone. There is a large number of female child ex-combatants who have not found employment. Majority of the unemployed youths fled their communities during the war. It has been identified that female child combatants is a major factor for peace-building in particular cities such as Freetown, Bo, Kenema, and others. It was also important to create job opportunities for these female child ex-combatants. Without dealing with poverty and employment opportunities, these female ex-combatants risk re-recruitment into armed forces or, criminal activity.

Besides, it has been reported that former child combatants are a volatile and destabilising group who represent a security risk to fragile transitional governments and to economic reconstruction. Furthermore, within contexts of profound poverty and prevalent social problems, as is often the reality of post-conflict countries, it is easy to see how the unique needs and circumstances of youth, and particularly girls, can take a back seat to seemingly more pressing and urgent socio-economic priorities. In Sierra Leone, for example, the extent and consequences of the problem of street children is a direct consequence of the failure to reintegrate some former child combatants[432]. Whereas many have been successfully reintegrated, those who were not formally demobilized are now found on the streets. There has been similar reporting and analysis on the impacts of social disorder caused by the conflict in Sierra Leone attributed to women and girls. There are many reports of displaced and unemployed females who are however, not characterized as a security threat. Instead, the concern for women and girls is that poverty, combined with the lack of social norms and regulations encourage females turn to prostitution. In the end, because of extreme poverty, the dislocation of families and the breakdown of social structures during the war, many girls, and some boys, are engaging in prostitution and sex in exchange for economic and other benefits[433]". Another report supported this observation that it was "particularly those

[432] Carson, J. Opening remarks, Workshop on Demobilisation, Reintegration and Reconciliation of Soldiers and Combatants, Nairobi, 20 March 2001

[433] Participatory Research Study with Adolescents and Youth in SL www. Womenscommission.org/reports/sl/06.shtml, accessed 12th October 2008

displaced from their homes and with few resources (who) resorted to prostitution as a means to support themselves and their children[434]".

Although the whole DDR process was making a stable progress, the reintegration attribute of the process faced challenges but what has been accomplished is significant in contrast with what seemed to be possible during the conflict. It was found out that some of the female ex-combatants were left behind with rebels and delayed the process and blocked access to many areas across the country. What hampers effective reintegration of female ex-combatants mostly is the discriminatory nature of the reintegration process in Sierra Leone.

Finally, the success of the process was also affected by the economic situation of Sierra Leone. The negative impact of economic and social vulnerability created a backlash of negative consequences for female combatants. This resulted in some of the training provided for the female ex-combatants as inadequate, as there was no market for the services they were trained to provide. According to the World Fact Book website, sixty eight percent of the population was below the poverty line, and the average income of an individual citizen is a mere five hundred dollars (U.S.) a year[435].

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[434]Country report on Human Rights Practices 2003 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour Feb 25, 2004

[435] James Traub, The New York Review of Books June 29, 2000 p 61

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The report has conveyed some of the predicaments facing female ex-combatants in post-War Sierra Leone that must be tackled for effective inclusion of women in reconstruction of the society, especially in the DDR process. It is still important for us to acknowledge that there are still lots of work to be done to make this happen successfully. In addition the report has shown that there is a need to address the challenges that make it difficult for female ex-combatants to get involved in post-conflict reconstruction. The inclusion of female ex-combatants in DDR is a must if we are honest about achieving positive peace in the post war situation. If these processes are not taken care of, there will be lapses in the sustainable reconstruction of the post-war society. As stated in the IDDRS: 'If the aim of DDR is to provide broad-based community security, it cannot create insecurity for this group of women by ignoring their special needs[436]. Recognition of the extra categories of female beneficiaries proposed in the IDDRS, 'female ex-combatants', is designed to ensure that females are not overlooked. The initiatives made in Sierra Leone may be applauded as successful, particularly the DDR process. However, the issue of female ex-combatants in the DDR process has hitherto been viewed as problematic and policies used restrict the entry of women into the DDR process. The position of female ex-combatants in post-war Sierra Leone reveals not only some of the rifts and ruptures present in local gender relations but also some of its continuities. A key lesson that can be learnt from the DDR process is that female ex-combatants were systematised and analysed from a gender perspective. The under-representation of female ex-combatants in the Sierra Leonean DDR process led women to a more difficult road to post-conflict recovery. They should therefore be recognized as active agents in all phases of DDR rather than passive victims in peace processes, including DDR. To exclude their voices and experiences and to ignore their contributions ultimately undermines peace- building. This may be possible if African countries are willing to learn as much as possible from the experiences of other regions, while at the same time recognizing the continent's own special challenges, such as the occurrence of contemporary armed conflicts.

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[436] UN Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre p. 11

The DDR process in Sierra Leone is a success story; it achieved many of its objectives. It can be used as a source of lessons for other African war-torn countries where females were used as combatants. This has been illustrated with examination in this thesis of all social stereotypes, norms, rules and structures violated, destroyed and invalidated during the conflict and peace process. The assumption that the DDR policies were based on the notion that men are natural combatants and women are not active combatants but their contribution was natural, was radically challenged by the Sierra Leone case despite their roles and experience during the conflict. In particular, the gendered assumptions also served to silence accounts of female combatants fulfilling traditional combat roles during the conflict.

However, the lesson learnt from the Sierra Leone female ex-combatants is that, despite their extreme vulnerability, the involvement of the DDR process to female combatants in Sierra Leone has contributed to building peace despite some challenges and difficulties. The DDR process in Sierra Leone has yielded important lessons that other post-conflict countries embarking on DDR process in dealing with female ex-combatants can adopt. There is evidence of the female ex-combatants who have been reunited and have reconciled with their families and communities. Another lesson learned is that the experience of the DDR process in Sierra Leone confirms that the requirements for entry into the DDR process such as the possession of a weapon or on the basis of selection by the force leader were significant barriers to women and girls. The lesson is that from the earliest planning stages, the principle actors in the DDR process, must work together to develop plans and identify strategic competencies to lead to a collaborative approach. It is important that the design and planning of a DDR process should incorporate these lessons intelligently, respecting the specific characteristic of each conflict, but using experience as a preventive tool, to identify and reduce risks.

The answer to the thesis question is more glaring. The inclusion of female ex-combatants in post-conflict reconstruction is a must if we are honest about achieving positive peace in the post-war situation. In the process of inquiring, the study had to look at the reintegration process from various angles, involving several actors; it is safe to conclude that the reintegration of female ex-combatants is a moral imperative that has not been met in Sierra Leone. It was discovered that the impact of the war and female child combatants' experiences

during the conflict affects them during the reintegration process. It is therefore still rhetoric. The role of the female ex-combatants is hardly acknowledged from the onset of peace negotiations and their rights are not identified as explicit priority in reintegration plans. It is claimed that "Women and young people are rarely consulted during the political process of peace negotiations, yet they are often the ones who keep their communities alive - emotionally and physically - during the times of war[437]". The study also portrayed that many reintegration processes do not apply the rights-based approach, if they did, then female ex-combatants will not be stigmatised or some of their rights ignored. If a dichotomy were not put between male and female combatants, maybe effective reintegration would have been possible. Unfortunately, female ex-combatants are always considered as sex tools or victims of sexual violence while men are seen as 'combatants'. However, the most effective way to combat violence against women is to make women messengers of peace instead of victims of violence, and this reflects the vision for women.

Africa's relative establishment of the DDR process to include female combatants gives chance to learn from both the mistakes and achievements of other regions which have grappled with the problem of failure of the DDR process. African countries, with help from the international community, have the potential to build on these experiences and create their own success story. Likewise, the UN needs stronger enforcement of the code of conduct against exclusion of women in the DDR process.

A key lesson that can be learnt from DDR process is that women were systematised and analysed from a gender perspective. The under-representation of women in the Sierra Leonean DDR process led women to a more difficult road to post-conflict recovery. It has to be learned that women are victims of the peace process that limits their empowerment as a result of being left behind in the DDR. They should therefore be recognized as active agents and major stakeholder rather than passive victims in all peace processes undertaken, including the DDR. This may be promising if African countries are willing to learn as much as possible from the experiences of other regions, while at the same time recognizing the continent's own special challenges, such as the occurrence of contemporary armed conflicts.

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[437] Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1995 p 3

Finally, the lessons of inclusion, cooperation, coordination and consideration to the context are important lessons that can be instrumental in improving the process of future DDR endeavours. In general the reintegration process has not been able to communicate or share many of its improved processes; this has prevented the improved processes to be spread further. Moreover the essential presence of optimism and hope need to be accompanied by realistic and applicable plans, processes and implementation; along with careful attention to the context and subsequent complexities, optimism, hope and a realistic approach providing the necessary basis for the development of a reintegration process with the potential for success.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS

Practical implications and needs

It is evident that the intended manifest functions of the DDR process were eventually dysfunctional to female ex-combatants and society. To address the problems that result from their invisibility, careful attention must be paid to the question of what happens to female combatants before, during and after the DDR process. According to Kathleen Jennings the DDR has quickly become an essential aspect of post-war reconstruction, but that there exists little understanding of its impact. She goes on to add that the DDR should take into account context, conflict histories and socio-economic conditions of countries in order to better mould effective case-specific programs. She further insists that the needs of "particularly vulnerable groups" should be taken into consideration and that the DDR process can not be viewed as successful if they continue to undermine certain populations, or leave certain groups of ex-combatants dissatisfied[438]".

Although we have identified reasons for female ex-combatants inclusion in DDR, it is still important for us to acknowledge that there is still a lot of work to do to make this happen successfully. Research has shown that, there is a need to address the challenges that make it difficult for females to get involved. The recommendations highlighted below, many of which have been alluded in international law, seek to suggest recommendations that should be considered during developmental phases of the DDR and their implementation in the DDR process to include the protection of female ex-combatants from marginalisation. The challenges that are aforementioned need to be considered and the DDR process well planned before implementation to avoid the difficulties experienced recently in countries undergoing DDR. DDR practitioners also need to take note of lessons learned from Sierra Leone, when designing DDR processes for countries making the difficult transition from war to peace.

In light of the research findings, an alternative approach and vision with regard to the ways in which female ex-combatants are perceived, represented, and conceptualized is proposed. It seems critical to challenge traditional portrayals of female ex-combatants as purely silent

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[438] Jennings, Kathleen M. "The Struggle to Satisfy: DDR Through the Eyes of Ex-Combatants in Liberia." International Peacekeeping Vol. 14 No. 2 2007, p 204

victims. Instead of focusing exclusively on female ex-combatants' vulnerability and victimization, it is essential to pay attention to their self-efficacy, resilience, and skills. There is an urgent need for a gender and people-centred perspective in assessing the contribution of women and the poor, where the majority of women are to be found. Moreover, given their significant presence and multiple roles within fighting forces, female combatants' experiences and perspectives should be considered as central and vital to understanding and analyses of war and political violence, and not regarded as secondary or unwittingly or wittingly rendered invisible.

In many situations the DDR process is firmly linked to broader political frameworks, such as ceasefires and peace agreements, but is insufficiently linked to frameworks for peace-building, recovery and development. For development initiatives, the primary objective of broadening our understanding of the intersection of gender and armed conflict is to recognise and address forms of gender-specific disadvantage by conventional, gender-blind representations of armed conflict and its aftermath. This thesis has demonstrated the diverse experiences and needs of female ex-combatants, who invariably function in both traditional and non-traditional roles, have generally not been recognised. Similarly, the distinct disadvantages faced by men have been misunderstood. For instance, gender-based violence (GBV) female victims are shunned by family and community while male victims are unable to access counselling or other services. Hence this impedes our understanding of gender relations, blinding us to the ways in which we may promote gender equality and thereby contribute to the establishment of sustainable, peaceful post-conflict societies.

There is still a need for better critical analysis of the limitations placed on female ex-combatants in the name of returning to "the status quo". Female ex-combatants who may have gained positions of authority are expected to return to their accepted roles within the family; single mothers who may be victims of multiple rape are encouraged to marry; and women are expected to care for their children even if they have no support from the fathers and even if they may be the products of rape. In this sense, reintegration does not indicate progress and opportunity for the entire society.

Further examination into post-conflict in the name of development and security must be taken in order to expose the vast gaps of silence that continue to surround women's experiences. Mechanisms need to be put in place for the monitoring of their utilization. There is also a desperate need to determine why feminists have been so reluctant to theorize about violent women. Gender specialists should be more effectively utilized to catalyse, facilitates, advice and support managers to fulfil their responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives into the work of organizations. However, as NGOs and development agencies take on the role of the state, it is essential that these organizations be examined as political bodies and held accountable of the impacts to their actions. Progress in gender mainstreaming should be systematically monitored and documented

Post-conflict processes, particularly the DDR, affirmed that the roles men carried out during the conflict were acceptable and natural extensions of their masculine qualities. There is a need of avoiding a gendered peace. The thesis proposes that the needs for men and women should be addressed equally. This stresses the advantages of equal opportunity for both men and women as it promotes positive peace. This policy objective helps to ensure that female combatants are involved in peace-building like male combatants and it challenges violent and aggressive aspects of masculinity. This study recommends that males be re-trained in key institutions like security to allow reform to take place. This training will inform men on gender issues. In contrast, the DDR excluded and dishonoured women who were participants in the conflict. Men were offered various training opportunities, and were encouraged to seek employment. Women were given few choices in choosing their reintegration process: limited training, marriage, motherhood, or returning to their families. Each of these choices was seen as an opportunity to hide their identities as combatants and to 'blend in' to the community. While women continually experienced shame throughout the reintegration process, men were offered opportunities and the prospect of starting life anew. The DDR process, for example, neither attempted to shame men for, nor educate them about, the illegality of rape nor encouraged men to take responsibility for children they may have fathered during the conflict. Substantial efforts need to continue in the areas including the provision of educational and employment opportunities, health care, child care assistance, family reunification, counselling, and community sensitization. Security Council resolution 1325 specifically urges "parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and

girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse[439]. For instance, Veale emphasises some gender specific issues that should be addressed by the DDR process. These include physical security during encampment, appropriate health services such as HIV/AIDS screening and reproductive health, and appropriate pre-discharge information about women's rights and entitlements, as they differ from men's[440] . Additionally, Bouta and Frerks emphasize that "gender-sensitizing policies require a thorough gender analysis that clarifies the interrelationship between gender, the specific conflict situation and the potentially different impact of external interventions on women and men[441]". The example of gender analysis brings to the fore the different ways women and men are exposed to sexual violence during armed conflict or highlights the distinct reintegration needs of girls and boys who have been abducted and forced to serve in armed movements operating in Africa. In general, "there is very limited information on gender and conflict prevention[442]. There is also a need to make special provisions for female ex-combatants in post-conflict forums of deliberation and decision-making. For this girl in Sierra Leone noted: "Girls and boys should be involved in developing programs because they know where their interests lie[443]".

Peace-building is a continuous process and should involve men and women at all levels of decision-making. This thesis suggests that community participation is often the key to successful planning and implementation of a DDR process. Moreover, it undertakes gender analysis at every stage of policy design, implementation and evaluation to ensure that all forms of gender discrimination are eliminated and to protect and promote women's human rights. Despite the fact that the DDR process is gender specific, it must also target the males in the returning community without being done with the aim of discriminating against the female ex-combatants. My opinion is that gender cannot effectively be addressed without male engagement to understanding the gender relation challenges facing women. Otherwise the males, who tend to dominate, will feel marginalized and threatened. Thus, the whole

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[439] Security Council Resolution 1325, cited in United Nations, Women, Peace and Security, p 167
[440] Veale A. Op Cit p 33
[441] Bouta and Frerks, Op Cit. p 42
[442] *Ibid* p 145
[443] Denov Myriam. & Maclure, R. Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Experiences, Implications and Strategies for Community Reintegration. Report for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). 2005 p 27

process of DDR could be counter productive. Therefore, female ex-combatants themselves also have to change their behaviour so that the potency of the DDR process can be recognised. Gender-sensitive DDR should be encouraged through increased funding for local organizations that provide gender-specific training and support for female ex-combatants and their families to re-integrate into post-conflict society. These services should recognize the changes in gender relations that take place during periods of conflict as both women and men assume new roles. In short, DDR processes need to be more inclusive in their fundamental premise.

The availability of resources plays a key role in determining the success of a DDR process. Human and financial resources committed to gender issues and DDR are inadequate. There is a need for funding research that looks at comparative gender studies and the long-term implications of female second-rate reintegration. DDR and gender components must be adequately financed through the UN peacekeeping budgets, not through voluntary contributions alone. When governments fund disarmament, the UN should facilitate gender and DDR financing. Where possible, the DDR process should not rely on a hodgepodge of various funding arrangements, which often have different reporting requirements, restrictions, and priorities, and can lead to needlessly duplicative activities. The international community should also take responsibility to ensure that the use of aid and assistance for this purpose is done in a more gender-sensitive manner so that a large section of the population, namely women that have so far been excluded can be involved in greater measure.

Ideally there should be specific components within national development strategies to address the issue. The research is suggesting that wider issues of impoverishment and marginalisation also need to be addressed through more inclusive approaches to programmatic activities to help traumatised female ex-combatants to overcome their feelings of guilt and shame. The government of Sierra Leone could therefore do its best to improve the livelihoods of those who are supposed to embrace these girls and women in their return.

Lessons to local and international peace builders is that peace-building needs to be continuous in order to heal deep wounds or be attuned to early warnings of crises recurring and the urgency to develop local capacity for conflict prevention work. Thus, Security

Council members must address the yawning gap that exists between the peace-building challenges. A gender approach is required for a wider awareness of female and male role models and the constructs of masculinity that may contribute to violence. If the DDR process is to become inclusive it will be necessary to: help to rebuild self-esteem, raise awareness within society of the needs of DDR women and girls and reconciliation. The fulfilment of UNSCR 1325 is unlikely where human security is in jeopardy. DDR is a short and long term process and it requires capital intensive programming to provide female ex-combatants with skills and employment in civilian life. There is a need to plan the DDR process so that it takes place within the context of economic growth through aspects such as creating job opportunities. There should be contingency planning when reunification is impossible, if the female ex-combatants have been rejected by their families or communities. They should be counselled and provided with civic education, life skills and education to foster their gainful employment into decent work and activities.

The study recommends that DDR processes require significant changes in attitude on the female ex-combatants, particularly those in the communities to which they return; there is a need to consider DDR as a new social contract between female ex-combatants and their post conflict environment, to help assist in lessening stigma and rejection of women and girls, the process should being carried out with the input of communities they live in. The special needs of female ex-combatants should also be taken of during this process in order to avoid inevitable problems that arise in the communities such as shame, fear, discrimination, and others. The needs of the community that may result in threats to the peace process should also be considered and carefully targeted in the reintegration. The reintegration process should address the special vulnerabilities of female ex-combatants and their children born in the bush and ensure that they have equal training and employment opportunities.

It is captured in the often used quote from an old Africa proverb that “if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but when you educate a woman, you educate a nation”. Another anticipated benefit of the education of women is that this would permit women to develop new identities and adopt new roles within the family and in society, including having more decision-making power, both at home and in the public sphere. Fail to educate a woman, and you fail to educate an entire nation, and the nation suffers. Education is an important and

immediate aftermath of armed conflict implementation. Such an arrangement for DDR warrants consideration with a view to enhancing local capacity. Strengthening local institutions and NGOs is of vital importance in the process of DDR, to relocate these female ex-combatants and begin the process of understanding their potential, vulnerabilities, dreams and ambitions; they need good institution in place. Education is the priority concern for girl child combatants' reintegration, educational reform is therefore key to strengthening peace. As it as been argued by Joy Kwesiga that "educating women constitutes a crucial escape route from the poverty traps that place the African continent at the tail end of access to essential resources of modern development[444]". The process of reintegration must help female ex-combatants to establish new foundations in life based on their individual capabilities. Former child combatants have grown up away from their families and have been deprived of many of the normal opportunities for physical, emotional and intellectual development, as observed by Emile Durkheim in his examination of principle task of education in post-conflict war[445]. He recognized that the challenge of adapting curricula and educational systems to changed post-war circumstances is a huge task and one that cannot be tackled without the active involvement of the clients themselves[446]".

The achievement of sustainable DDR is a complex process that must involve whole communities as well as processes that need to target specific groups who were involved in fighting such as female ex-combatants. This is exactly what the peace-building efforts of which DDR is a part needs to address to avoid recurrence of conflict. This research argues that the success of a peace process is based on the success of the DDR process too. Therefore, there is a need to bridge the gap between the law on paper and the law in practice as the laws existing to protect women are often ignored. The governments and the international communities that are involved in design and implementation of the DDR process should enforce a zero-tolerance policy to women participation in the process. The

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[444] Kwesiga Joy C. Women's Access to Higher Education in Africa: Uganda's Experience, Fountain Publishers, 2002 Chapter 4-11

[445] Krijn Peters, Paul Richards and Koen Vlassenroot What Happens to Youth, During and After Wars? A Preliminary Review of Literature on Africa and an Assessment of the Debate , RAWOO http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:oSpSBPAe6coJ:www.rawoo.nl/pdf/youthreport.pdf+Durkheim+on+principle+task+of+education+in+post+conflict+war&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=9&client=firefox-a p 19 accessed 1st August 2008

[446] *Loc Cit.*

process must increase efforts to make sure women and girls are involved and informed about their rights in the DDR process, whether or not they have weapons. The DDR process should be designed in a way that minimises shame and maximises security for women. The training that is provided by DDR should have special programmes that provide them with remuneration, not perpetuating the gendered division of labour or low-paid skills. It's important also that women should be having access to training in both traditional and non traditional skills[447]. The DDR training should promote the diversification with focus on global market access.

There is a need to identify special target groups particularly of female ex-combatants, abducted civilian women, and dependants. More important is to re-define who qualifies as target group for DDR process in their reintegration, there is a need to identify skills training and apprenticeship for women who leave school prematurely. The priority should be to expand educational and economic opportunities, especially for women, to improve their lives through incentives for motherhood and small amounts of loans for business. Emphasis should be put on creating new forms of productive employment rather than petty businesses which are very popular and increase minimal margin. This business adds little or no productive value. The best way is to assist poor rural women end gender inequities in resource-challenged environments by providing them with micro-credit revolving loans to establish new businesses. A comprehensive micro-credit program for these rural women can dramatically expand their businesses, earn them more discretionary income, and uplift their economic and social status in the society. The IDDRS, for example, emphasizes the importance of "balancing equity with security," of making sure that "reintegration support for ex-combatants is not…regarded as special treatment for ex-combatants, but rather as an investment in security for the population as a whole"[448] and ultimately by arguing that "all war-affected populations should be given equal access to reintegration opportunities.[449]".

[447] Barth, E.F. The Reintegration of Female Soldiers in Post Conflict Societies, A Comparative Study from Africa. Oslo: PRIO. http://www.aidworkers.net/exchange/20030820.html, 2003 accessed 17th August 2008
[448] IDDRS, 4.30, p 6
[449] *Loc Cit.*

The study recommends that the attainment of the Gender Goal, MDG 3, will only be possible with provision of adequate resources, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of programmes both in the gender specific sector and gender pertinent sectors. According to Sandra Whitworth, in order for feminist voices to be 'heard' by the UN, feminists must engage with the institution on its own terms. This often occurs in a manner that 'turns a critical term ("gender") into an instrument for problem-solving goals. Trying to insert gender into the dominant discourse of peacekeeping being produced within a UN context significantly finites the possibilities of critique[450]'. To mitigate the gender inequalities, there is a need to develop gender equality standards and strong political will to ensure women receive adequate attention and their issues effectively addressed. There is a need of ensuring gender expertise during the DDR process to address the invisibility of women and girls. An important strategy for gender sensitivity, capacity building, and awareness raising activities needs to be incorporated into all DDR process in its widest sense and alertness to opportunities to make a positive contribution. In addition, gender must be recognized as a vital component of plans and programs to avoid, ease and unravel conflict situations, and to build sustainable peace by mainstreaming gender perspectives in all aspects of UN peace operations; in ensuring the relevance to all stakeholders, responsive to their needs, and effective in the promotion of equality.

In order to address root causes of gender inequality and to bring fundamental changes in gender relations and identities, we need more gender-sensitive, particularly men-sensitive as well as women-sensitive analysis on conflict and post-conflict situations with long-term perspectives rather than expecting radical change in the short term. The effective approaches in which positive cultural and social transformations of manhood and womanhood could be encouraged and nurtured are still unclear.

Gender is a crosscutting issue in post-conflict and still needs to be integrated horizontally across policy instruments and programmes; utilising lessons learned to answer the 'how?' and not be just a thematic issue 'tacked on' as an afterthought. This means that reintegration has to be a long term initiative in: ensuring that combatants do not return, understanding how

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[450] Sandra Whitworth, Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis, Lynne Rienner Publishers, August 2004 p 120

societies can rebuild (including the gender dimensions of this process) to increase the possibilities for lasting peace[451]. There is a need to address conflict resolution in a more gendered way and also with an appropriate understanding of women's agency in both peace and war. DDR processes that focuses on one segment of society (for female combatants), without considering how that group interacts with the rest of society, have had limited effect. It is increasingly understood that women need and deserve inclusion in DDR processes with a great contribution to the planning and execution of weapons collection and reintegration process if they are properly educated and trained.

A new model that is replicable, scalable and capable of being adapted to local contexts is required to lead the field of peace-building in new directions so that gender roles and power relations become central components of peace processes. This study recommends the introduction of new structures, particularly in DDR processes, in order to provide early intervention (education and training) and implementation of similar structures like Prison of War or Gender Unit, which can prepare for, oversee and facilitate this process. There is a need for male and female combatants to have a different kind of DDR process. There is a need to reclaim and support efforts to help women's dignity, health, livelihood and families as well as establish confidential ways for women and girls to seek treatment and counselling within the DDR camps, particularly women who feared discrimination and stigmatization. As Arthy contends, in future DDR efforts, one organization should conduct combatant disarmament and demobilization, and an entirely separate organization should be responsible for the reintegration of both ex-combatants and non-combatants. He argues that this division could also stimulate a much more direct linkage between more general community recovery projects and the reintegration challenge. This delinking would most probably make it easier to adopt a more comprehensive and engendered approach to reintegration activities[452]. Reintegration activities could be much better adapted to the different needs and skills of male and female ex-combatants in areas such as security, (reproductive) health, education, employment, and information dissemination[453]. It may ensure that reintegration processes do

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[451] Kingma, K. Op Cit. 1999

[452] Arthy Simon. DFID Funded Reintegration Activities in Sierra Leone: Reintegration Lesson Learning Impact Evaluation. DFID 2003

[453] Farr V. Gendering Demilitarization as a Peace building Tool p 30

not contribute to the restoration of pre-conflict gender roles, but instead try to capitalize on positive gender roles during conflict.

DDR processes need to go to an extra mile to foster awareness and acceptance within the community of those involved in the conflict by providing a sustained information flow. One is to ensure predominant dissemination of information for female ex-combatants. This also must be formed from a broad-based understanding of security as a right for all. DDR process should work through educational efforts/campaigns such as radio, leaflet or by preparing the community during the village meeting. Radio is often the best means of reaching the widest audience with information about the DDR process. The process should be directed not only at combatants, but at the larger community, to inform them of activities and how they can participate in the DDR process. As pointed out by the World Bank, the key factors for successful social reintegration are good relations with family, friends and community, which in effect, constitute the ex-combatants' social capital[454].

The negative attitudes that communities often have towards female ex-combatants, as well as the issue of shame and the threat of stigmatization of these females if they are identified as ex-combatants must be taken under serious consideration when DDR processes are planned. Assistance must take its point of departure from the fact that female ex-combatants may lack social networks due to rejection by families and male partners. Moreover, extra efforts are required to inform female ex-combatants on access to DDR process, to discourage stigmatization and promote reintegration of women into their communities. The research suggests that community participation is often the key to successful planning and implementation of a DDR process. This will include changing the perceptions and attitudes towards all the process[455].

One of the components of the DDR process is the question of how to harness the transformation of sustainable peace; this can only be achieved by open political economy to women in a way that it values and recognizes women. This transformation is thus only

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[454] World Bank., "The Demobilisation and Reintegration of Ex-Combatant in Sub-Saharan African: Initiating Memorandum." Washington. DC 1996 p 13
[455] *Loc Cit*

possible with the total transformation of the present patriarchal gender relations[456]. The former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan reiterates that: only if women play a full and equal part can we build the foundations for enduring peace[457]. Therefore, gender in all mechanisms is very important. It is clear that women's absence from the DDR process has critical impact on them. In due course, it is important that post-conflict governments and donors prepare to invest more on sustained effort to peace-building for a successful a DDR process to be realized.

Profoundly, there is a need to develop policies that recognise the contribution of female ex-combatants in the armed conflict and empowerment of women to participate in the DDR process in armed conflict in Africa historically and today. There is a need to provide protection for the women who are victims of DDR process. There is a need to discuss their image of a culture of peace as well as the strategies for removal of social, political and other hindrances in mandating gender in peace efforts. As seen in the previous chapter, in order to restructure this situation in Sierra Leone, parents can be sensitized as to their obligations. The Cape Town principles state that family reunification is the principal factor in effective reintegration and in order for it to be successful, special attention must be paid to the emotional link between the child and the family prior to return[458]. The institution for successful reintegration is therefore the same with family reunification and a productive involvement is community life[459]. Likewise scholars such Reichenberg Dita and Sara Friedman[460] also acknowledge this point.

Adequate measures should therefore be taken to alleviate the plight of street children and prostitute among whom are girl child combatants excluded from the reintegration process; the

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[456] Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredeth Turshen (eds), The aftermath: Women in post-conflict transformation, London, Zed Books, 2001 pp 63-77

[457] Sandra Whitworth, 'Gender, Race and the Politics of Peacekeeping', in Edward Moxon-Browne (ed.) A Future for Peacekeeping*?*, London: Macmillan, 1998 p 190.

[458] Cape Town principles, para 32(a)

[459] McCallin Margaret. Community Involvement in the Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers. In: P. J. Bracken and C. Petty, eds., Rethinking the Trauma of War (60–75). London: Free Association. 1998 p 15

[460] Reichenberg Dita and Sara Friedman Traumatized children, healing the invisible wounds of children in war: a rights approach. In Daniel, Y., N.S. Rodley and Weisaeth (eds.). International responses to traumatic stress. Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., Amityville, N.Y. 1996 pp 307-326

girls do prostitution for survival[461]. Furthermore, apart from adopting the rights-based approach, the whole issue of reintegrating female child combatants needs to be seen within a more holistic lens. If possible, there should be specific components within national development strategies to address the issue. The study is suggesting that wider issues of impoverishment and marginalization need to be addressed as well as strategies to help traumatized female ex-combatants to overcome their feelings of guilt and shame, hence a more effective post-conflict reconstruction. The government of Sierra Leone could therefore do its best to improve the livelihoods of those who are supposed to embrace these females in their return.

As emphasized above, the research suggests discrimination and stigma problem against female ex-combatants is not an isolated event, but tries to understand the ways this process is connected to the ways we structure society in general. To do this we have to address the whole problem instead of analysing each phenomenon separately, giving the impression that they somehow are isolated. It is important to also continue the theoretical discussion with support from empirical studies trying the theories against different situations. Perhaps even more important, the resolution reaffirms the implementation of the obligations of Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the CRC and Optional Protocols that aimed at addressing discrimination against females. We must work for a non-discriminatory and non-sexist society in which all females are treated as equal citizens. The end of discrimination against women will go a long way towards addressing the root causes of sexual violence. Effective reintegration of female ex-combatants will only be a reality if the issue of gender in reintegration processes is not seen as a luxury. All initiatives should be much more gender oriented, non-discriminatory and designed to meet their specific needs.

In a nutshell, I believe that the study actually portrays that many DDR processes do not apply the rights-based approach to the process. If they did, then female ex-combatants will not be stigmatized or some of their rights ignored. A rights-based approach to DDR will be the ultimate solution to making effective processing of female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone a reality. To work, DDR processes needs genuine political support from all parties to the

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[461] Torres A.B. FMO Thematic Guide: Gender and Forced Migration. New York Washington DC 2002 pp 4-6

conflict, national and international commitment. Numerous reports of lessons learned from the DDR in Sierra Leone also indicate that, "it is vitally important that further commitment is put forward to ensure that the needs of females are included in (DDR) activities and that the pleas for increased support to 'reintegration' are answered[462]". A greater emphasis must be placed on demilitarization as an integral component of the DDR process. Lead actors must shift from an emphasis on disarmament and demobilisation to an emphasis on "engendering the 'R' of DDR[463]. They must have clear aims and objectives, meet the needs of all vulnerable groups, address their needs and have good information-gathering networks. As Mats Berdal points out, disarmament per se does not necessarily enhance security unless it is part of a broader political process that seeks to reconcile conflicting parties and enhance security by a mixture of confidence--building measures[464]. However, the disarmament and demobilisation is a very important yardstick by which progress and success of the peace process will be measured.

Partnerships with other UN and international entities, and women's civil society organizations are essential, with all supporting the goals of women for full and equal participation. Support should also be given to the development of local organizations to promote the participation of female ex-combatants.

DDR process should be a major instrument for transformation of gender relations in post-conflict societies. It also requires the inclusion of women in the design and decision-making of DDR process and it involves programming that is sensitive to women's needs. More gender-sensitive training is needed to promote sustainable livelihoods for female ex-combatants. Women are among the most vulnerable groups in post-conflict situations. This implies adequate pre-DDR assessments, the presence of female staff in the DDR process, and the separation of women from men during interviews and cantonment, attention for women's health issues and sexual and gender-based violence, and efforts aimed at securing women's

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[462] Julien Temple, Preparatory Committee For the 2006 Review Conference On the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF, 13 January, 2006, New York

[463] Bouta, Frerks, and Bannon, Gender, Conflict and Development, p 19

[464] Mats Berdal, Disarmament and Demobilization after Civil Wars. Adelphi Paper, 303. London: International Institute for Strategic Studies. 1996 p 38

ability to make their own choices and use DDR benefits in the way they want. Finally, a gendered approach requires a wider awareness of male and female role models and the constructs of masculinity that may contribute to violence.

In post-conflict, re-integration of female ex-combatants should be handled attentively because it is possible that they can be neglected. Most of that time, the demobilization process request a return of one's guns for relief or assistance, and female ex-combatants who have no guns could be neglected. So efforts should be made to include these combatants in the re-integration process, and "establish support groups of female combatants that have been in similar positions in order to share traumatic experiences, and assist female combatants in giving access to property after they have returned home[465]".

There is need for a review of national, regional and international mechanisms for the DDR female ex-combatants and the extent to which they have been implemented. Whether these mechanisms had been effective in meeting the needs of female ex-combatants and in ensuring justice for women, or whether conditions continued to provide for impurity, is something of concern. There are too few trained women peacekeepers, civilian police and experts engaged in DDR processes. Donors should facilitate the establishment of a regionally balanced group of women and gender DDR experts, and increase efforts to train those in leadership positions on gender analysis.

Because DDR processes generally define combatants as armed men, women are less likely to be identified as beneficiaries of DDR. Assistance should be targeted to all women; not just those who possess weapons and provide them with adequate assistance whether they were armed combatants or took on other roles such as cooks or messengers. Bouta et al suggest a clearer division of labour between security agencies and reintegration agencies. There is a need for clearer mandates and effective implementation mechanisms among security and reintegration agencies. An overarching problem with reintegration is that the definition of a female combatant is extremely limited in mainstream media and literature. Bouta et al emphasize the need for more generic guidelines to the definition of a female ex-combatant "… in order to avoid the situation where women associated with the armed forces become

[465] Bouta and Frerks, Op Cit. p 46

ineligible for assistance or that abducted women are regarded only as dependents… and not as combatants[466]" Gender expertise and data should be utilised in the planning, assessment and concept operation of every DDR process. The UN should provide all agencies with a sample language for the negotiation of gender issues into DDR packages and processes.

DDR process should be subject to equity, profitability, accountability and transparency and should include mechanisms for monitoring, oversight and evaluation of the process. Hence there is a need for programming guidelines, benchmarks for donors, accountability mechanism for international and local communities. International actors can also monitor processes to ensure that all ex-combatants are treated equally regardless of former affiliations. Accountability measures must be developed and applied to ensure that all staff is committed to gender equity. In addition, accountability for exclusion against female ex-combatants is an important aspect of gender justice, in particular, is in the context of post-conflict situations. This is a key pillar supporting the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Since DDR processes are usually conceived at the peace table, any UN personnel involved in facilitating or expediting a peace process should proactively assist the attendance of women's representatives, inform them about what DDR is and promote their involvement in the planning phase. This will contribute towards ensuring that female ex-combatants, women working in support functions to armed groups and forces, wives and dependents, as well as members of the receiving community, are informed and included in shaping any peace accord and related DDR plans.

DDR process should be examined on the regional level, because it is often the presence of armed groups on foreign soil which affects the relations between various African countries, thus preventing, the restoration of peace. For instance, it is within the framework of regional agreements to ask for an engagement of each country to prevent the existence of the armed groups. Similarly, the success and durability of the DDR process also depends on regional safety measures, such as the adoption of the pact on security, stability and development in the Africa region.

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[466] Bouta *et al* Op Cit. p 23

Ideally, DDR should be a state-led process. It is incumbent upon the national jurisdiction to implement enabling legislation to facilitate the DDR process. DDR should be nationally owned. DDR efforts must be better tailored to specific national circumstances, be nationally owned, take into account the regional dimensions of conflicts and be linked to wider reconstruction, recovery and development efforts. Legitimate national ownership implies the participation of a wide range of State and non-State actors, including civil society and women's organizations. Further, DDR process directives should require governments and agencies to consider the special needs of female ex-combatants. Such directives should include greater emphasis on reintegration rather than disarmament and effective follow up mechanisms to assess the impact of DDR process on women.

DDR process should not be overburdened, but should concentrate on what they do best, assisting ex-combatants. DDR should be more closely linked both to the initial peace agreements and to broader post-conflict relief, resettlement and rehabilitation efforts for all war-affected populations, including rebuilding local communities that were ravaged by war. DDR undertakings should, however, be linked with such broader actions, especially to help reintegrate ex-combatants and direct them towards productive roles. The thesis suggests that a growing awareness of the interrelationship between different elements of post-conflict peace-building requires conceptual clarity as a precondition for coordinated coherent and comprehensive interventions.

UNSCR 1325 must be translated into a wide range of local contexts. Just as women's exclusion has been local, societal, and global, so will the active participation of women in the area of peace and security at the local level contribute to peace and security at the societal level and eventually help reframe the concepts of peace and security at the global level. This study emphases that pressure for more effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 must be kept up. The reality, however, is that UNSCR1325 is still not being fully implemented in many situations. Women continue to play a marginalized and all too often token, role in peacemaking processes.

There is a need for a greater awareness of this problem to bring about much needed changes. There is a need for internationally agreed policy guidance and accepted principles to define

the female “combatant” and incorporate stronger enforcement and monitoring mechanisms. Although there have been some attempts to broaden the definition of combatant, from both UNSR 1325 and the CTP address this issue, and include in the category of combatant not only those carrying guns, this has not improved the situation for female combatants who continue to be excluded from DDR efforts. Therefore, if the intention is to reach all combatants, including females, it is essential to understand the mechanisms behind female combatants’. Careful attention must be paid to address the problems that result from their exclusion and alienation and why they sometimes choose not to participate and hence are left out in the cold.

These recommendations, though general, and are only a starting point in thinking about DDR of female ex-combatants. Aside from policy, the international community and the public at large have to change their attitudes and perceptions about female ex-combatants. Hopefully, changing perceptions of gender will eventually translate into policy change. Females are not passive bystanders; they are active combatants who have agency and human rights. The world needs to open its eyes and see the invisible female combatants particularly in Africa.

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