



SUPPORT TO MEDIATION PROCESS



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CONTENT

WHAT ROLE DOES DDR PLAY IN MEDIATION?	1
DDR/CVR ADDRESSING POTENTIAL SPOILERS	5
EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONAL DDR SUPPORT TO MEDIATION	9
RISKS OF DDR EXPERTISE MISSING AT THE MEDIATION	14
HOW TO REQUEST DDR SUPPORT TO MEDIATION EFFORTS?	16

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WHAT ROLE DOES DDR PLAY IN MEDIATION?

SUPPORT POLITICAL PROCESSES

The United Nations (UN) Security Council has increasingly been mandating peacekeeping operations and special political missions to engage with armed groups in contexts where conflict is still ongoing. In areas where no prerequisites for “traditional” Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) exist, including where no ceasefire or peace agreement has been signed, peace operations **support political processes** and implement innovative programmes for armed groups.

The management of armed actors is among key priorities in most areas emerging from conflict. This makes DDR and community violence reduction (CVR) officers among the **first UN staff deployed on the ground** with the mandate and expertise to engage directly with armed groups – an engagement that they will maintain throughout the negotiation and implementation phases of a political agreement.

DDR is the process of removing weapons from the hands of members of armed groups, taking these combatants out of their groups and helping them to reintegrate as civilians into society. In complex environments, this is often supported by CVR - an approach to DDR that plays a key role in reducing tensions at the grassroots level while increasing opportunities for social cohesion, economic development and conflict resolution. DDR and CVR are components of a larger process to manage armed groups and ultimately lead to their peaceful and orderly dissolution.

ADVISORY ROLE

In these contexts, United Nations' DDR and CVR officers are called upon to provide advice on **how to manage armed groups** and ultimately contribute to the attainment of the agreement. DDR and CVR officers, working closely with armed groups, are in a unique position to help ensure that implementable and realistic provisions on paramount issues to armed groups - including the DDR process itself and power-sharing - are included in the agreement.

In certain contexts, they also advise senior mission leadership on how to design programmes for armed groups **to build trust in a peace process** and open political space for engagement. In an environment defined by insecurity, holding patterns and community based approaches such as **community violence reduction, pre-DDR and local security arrangements** are often the only available option offered to members of armed groups who are ready to voluntarily denounce violence or sign a peace agreement.

Mediation is a process whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements.



Joint Commission for the
Doha Document for Peace in
Darfur, Khartoum (Sudan)
UN Photo/UNAMID



Community-based Labour-
Intensive Project (a local brand
name for CVR in Darfur),
El Fasher (Sudan)
UN Photo/UNAMID

DDR/CVR ADDRESSING POTENTIAL SPOILERS

As an innovative approach, some missions (e.g. MINUSCA) are testing the use of DDR and CVR processes to reduce the number of armed groups in the political process based on the assumption that **not all groups have nation-wide political agendas or needs exceeding those that can be addressed at a local level**. Today's armed entities may include:

- ① Small-scale local groups involved in local conflicts (e.g. over access to water or pastures)
- ① Criminal gangs or former armed groups turned into gangs
- ① Self-mobilized/self-defence groups without political agendas or representative command and control (including militarized communities and tribal militias)
- ① Transnational criminal networks

Group-specific DDR or CVR support, that could be provided without waiting for a final outcome of national political process, may address the needs of many groups taking part in hostilities. In these cases, DDR/CVR components could support mediation with armed groups to create national and sub-national frameworks for such arrangements, paying **close attention to those groups interests, and through targeted programing, develop tailored opportunities**. In cases of small localized armed groups that are deemed to be a risk to safety and security at national or subnational levels, DDR/CVR could offer a package approach which could involve **local-level mediation and programming** (e.g. CVR, reinsertion, skill development and income generation projects, etc.).

THREE KEY AREAS OF DDR SUPPORT TO MEDIATION

The DDR support to mediation processes comprises **three types of activities** that can be undertaken before, during and after the mediation process:

Direct Mediation support

- ① **Deployment of experts** to a peace operation or a mediation team
- ① **Drafting** of DDR-related clauses of agreements
- ① **Advising** on how to negotiate with armed groups on a national or sub-national level

Capacity- building

- ① **Sensitization** of armed groups on mediation processes; facilitating consent and building trust
- ① **Guiding** armed groups on the process of **selecting and/or empowering representatives**
- ① **Technical assistance to the parties** to make informed contributions on DDR-related provisions

Analysis

- ① **Mapping of armed groups**; contextual stakeholder analysis (indicating who should and who should not participate in a mediation process)
- ① **Analyzing the context** to identify entry points for engagement through political, social and economic incentives
- ① **Providing best practices** from peace processes, DDR and community violence reduction programmes, and analyzing how these can be adapted to specific contexts





Outreach activity on disarmament
and arms control, El Serif (Sudan)
UN Photo/UNAMID

EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONAL DDR SUPPORT TO MEDIATION

DARFUR

The Chief of the **UNAMID DDR Section** is part of the **UN-AU Joint Mediation Team** mandated to seek a peaceful settlement to the conflict in Darfur. He participated in the Abuja peace talks, which led to the Darfur Peace Agreement and in the Doha talks, which yielded the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur.

In both cases, he **advised the joint chief mediator** on issues regarding the cessation of hostilities, ceasefire mechanisms and final security arrangements, including **DDR**, while also **providing technical assistance** to the parties such as capacity building and negotiation support.

COLOMBIA

During the negotiations of the Colombia peace agreement, signed on 12 November 2016 in Havana, the **DDR Section briefed Colombian Government officials**, including the Defence Minister and the High Commissioner for Peace, on DDR and related issues, by sharing lessons learned from UN supported DDR and peace processes.

This technical expertise **helped win the trust of both parties** to the point of **helping draft parts of the final agreement**.

YEMEN

DDR expertise was provided through the **DPA Mediation Support Unit to peace negotiations** between the parties to the conflict held in Kuwait in June 2016. A DDR post was established with the Office of the Special Envoy, the main mandate of which has been to re-engage the parties in peace negotiations and eventually to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

The DDR Officer has played a variety of roles complementary to the security sector activities of the Office, including working with national de-escalation bodies in an advisory capacity. The DDR Officer's main mandated role is to **support negotiations, provide inputs to the draft peace agreement** (with the emphasis on security arrangements section) and to **support mapping and analysis** of armed groups, as well as **develop implementation plans**.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The Chief of the MINUSCA DDR Section was one of the key experts on the international mediation support team at the Bangui Forum in May 2015, which ended with the signing of a DDR agreement. The presence of DDR expertise during the negotiations **contributed significantly to reaching this agreement**, a milestone in the CAR peace process. A DDR expert was deployed as part of the UN team that negotiated a cessation of hostilities agreement between the ex-Séléka, anti-Balaka and other armed groups in Brazzaville on 23 July 2014.

While the political process continues, in 2018, **MINUSCA DDR component supports the mediation** at national and local levels by offering armed groups incentives to disarm while at the same time the Mission political strategy foresees enforcement measures for those who continue to pose a threat to security and stability.



Symbolic burning of weapons during a CVR programme closure ceremony, Berberati (Central African Republic)
UN Photo/MINUSCA



Tribal mediation, Kabkabiya (Sudan)
UN Photo/UNAMID

MALI

In March 2017, **the MINUSMA/DDR and the OROLSI/DDR Sections provided support to the Malian national DDR commission (NDDRC)** to organize a **workshop** in Fana (150 km from Bamako). Staff from both the NDDRC and the Integration Commission, as well as representatives of the parties from the Commission de Suivi de l'Accord and the Permanent Secretary of the Bureau du Haut Représentant du Président de la République attended the workshop.

The aim of this workshop was to **facilitate the planning of a fair and inclusive DDR process**, including long-term reintegration opportunities for ex-combatants.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

At the request of the Government of the Republic of Congo, transmitted through the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Brazzaville and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), **the DDR Section headed a joint technical assessment mission (UNOCA, UNDP, DPKO) to assist with the development of a DDR Strategy in support of a ceasefire agreement** signed between the Government and the Ninja Nsiloulou militia under the leadership of Mr. Frédéric Bintsamou alias Pasteur Ntumi on 23 December (the 'Kinkala Accord').

The DDR Section provided **strategic and technical advice** to Government officials and representatives of Pasteur Ntumi as members of the Commission ad hoc mixte-paritaire established to further negotiate and oversee the implementation of the Kinkala Accord. This laid the foundation for the creation of the framework for the United Nations System's involvement in Congo.

RISKS OF DDR EXPERTISE MISSING AT THE MEDIATION

Provisions related to armed actors, including non-state armed groups, are in most (post-)conflict contexts one of the key elements of mediation content and process.

Almost all political/peace agreements contain reference to DDR or another armed-group support. When DDR expertise is missing at the mediation process, common risks include:

- ❶ Ill-advised linkages of DDR with other processes that lead to unrealistic sequencing of activities and blockages in implementation
- ❷ Unrealistic or unimplementable DDR provisions in an agreement (including unrealistic timelines)
- ❸ Wrong programmatic assumptions for DDR (e.g. incorrect estimation of armed elements and therefore inadequate budget for DDR).

While an argument can be made that the final decision on the content of agreements rests with the parties to the conflict under mediation, **diligent expert guidance and advice, both to the mediator and the parties, reduces risks of misinformed decisions**, which could ultimately be blamed on mediation and, as a consequence, undermine trust in the peace process and in DDR.

Weapon hand-over ceremony, Goma
(Democratic Republic of the Congo)
UN Photo/MONUSCO



HOW TO REQUEST DDR SUPPORT TO MEDIATION EFFORTS?

As of February 2018, **207** DDR and CVR Officers were deployed to peacekeeping and special political missions, including **seven** at the DPKO HQ in New York. These officers, with diverse professional profiles and extensive experience, have negotiated with armed groups in some of the most challenging contexts the United Nations is working in, such as Sudan, Mali and the Central African Republic. Their expertise can also be made **available to missions and offices without a specific DDR mandate**.

In missions with a DDR component, a DDR Officer may be temporarily seconded to another component or organization, leading the international mediation efforts. This may be the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, the office of the SRSG, the Office of the DSRSG or the Political Affairs Section. In addition, **DDR staff with specific mediation expertise can be deployed on temporary duty** from another mission or the HQ for the duration of the mediation processes.

The Mediation Support Unit in the Department of Political Affairs continues to be the System-wide entry point on the United Nations' support to mediation and can facilitate the provision of DDR expertise as required. Alternatively, **mediation missions or offices without a DDR section can send their request to the DDR section in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations**, which can assist in identifying DDR staff to be deployed on a temporary or longer-term basis to assist in the mediation process.



The key contribution of a DDR program is its ability to open political and security space for other (unarmed) actors to participate in the postconflict political process.

Kelvin Ong

"Managing Fighting Forces:
DDR in Peace Processes"

United States Institute of Peace (2012)

www.un.org/peacekeeping/issues/ddr

Designed by the Graphic Design Unit, Department of Public Information, United Nations