

OG 4.10: Disarmament

4.10

DISARMAMENT

Objectives

This module will:

- ✓ provide guidance on how to plan and implement the disarmament component of a DDR programme;
- ✓ show how operational and technical risks can be reduced to tolerable levels; and
- ✓ explain the four phases of disarmament: (I) Information gathering and operational planning; (II) Weapons collection or retrieval; (III) Stockpile management; and (IV) Weapons destruction.

1. Introduction

Disarmament is usually seen as the first step of a DDR process, as the removal of weapons, ammunition and explosives from an individual is a highly symbolic act that signifies the end of his or her active role as a combatant. Disarmament is also essential to developing and maintaining a secure environment in which demobilization and reintegration can take place.

The disarmament component of a DDR programme needs to be comprehensive, effective, efficient and safe. It should be specifically designed to respond to the security environment and be planned in coherence with wider peace-building and recovery efforts.

National governments have the right and responsibility to apply their own national standards to all disarmament operations on their territory, but should act in compliance with international and regional arms control conventions, standards and best practices.

The disarmament carried out within a DDR programme is only one aspect of national arms control and reduction, and should support future related measures.

Box 4.10.1: Definition of disarmament

Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.

Source: Note by the Secretary-General on administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of UN peacekeeping operations, 24 May 2005 (A/C.5/59/31)

Plans to deal with the control of legal and illegal civilian possession, national stockpiles and security force possession should be put in place at the appropriate time.

2. Aims of disarmament

Disarmament is primarily aimed at reducing or controlling the number of weapons held by combatants before their discharge from armed forces or groups. The surrendered weapons should be collected, registered, stored and then either destroyed or, by previous arrangement with key stakeholders, redistributed to the new government for use by the national security forces, but only as part of a broader security sector review and reform process.

In the short term, disarmament also:

- signals that armed conflict is over and that the parties do not want to return to war;
- places the weapons beyond use and reduces the capacity of the parties to wage armed conflict; and
- builds individual and community confidence in the peace process.

The longer-term objective of disarmament is to reduce the potential for a wider return to armed violence and conflict.

3. Key safety and security issues

Before starting any form of disarmament, it is essential that DDR practitioners fully take account of three key safety and security issues that can undermine the disarmament process and threaten the fragile peace. These issues are outlined below.

3.1. Operational risks

The following operational risks associated with disarmament should be factored in during the DDR programme planning phase:

- *Threats to the safety and security of DDR programme personnel (both UN and non-UN, locally and internationally recruited):* Because they are designed to kill, weapons, ammunition and explosives are inherently dangerous. Therefore safety precautions should be followed strictly throughout the disarmament process. Moreover, individuals, armed forces or armed groups may be under the influence of alcohol, drugs and narcotics, and may act or respond irrationally. A rapid reaction procedure should be in place to neutralize/forcibly disarm such individuals, armed forces or armed groups if necessary;
- *Threats to the safety and security of participants and communities:* The disarmament process can also create potential risks to participants and communities, such

as casualties due to accidental firing of weapons and detonation/malfunctioning of ammunition and explosives. The chances of these accidents occurring should be minimized by the distribution of safety instructions to both participants and communities during the initial briefings and awareness programme.

3.2. Proportional and fair disarmament

Where two or more armed forces and groups are being disarmed, DDR practitioners should avoid situations where disarmament of one party proceeds much faster than the other(s). In such cases, DDR practitioners should employ *proportional disarmament* between the parties. This approach will:

- assist in preventing armed forces and groups from taking advantage of a sudden change in their favour in the balance of military capability;
- ensure that the neutrality of the disarmament organization is not compromised; and
- build trust and confidence in the disarmament process.

In this context, a mechanism should be developed to enable armed forces and groups to monitor or verify one another's disarmament.

Where disarmament is designed to dismantle armed groups and/or repatriate foreign troops as a means of consolidating the victory of one armed force or group over the other(s), combatants should be treated fairly and with dignity throughout the process, to minimize the chances of renewed violent conflict. This requires careful planning, transparent procedures, and an effective information and sensitization strategy throughout disarmament.

3.3. Technical risks and hazards

The physical condition of weapons, ammunition and explosives, and the environment in which they have been stored have a major effect on the level of risk. A formal risk assessment shall therefore be carried out before weapons collection or retrieval to ensure the safest possible working environment. This risk assessment should identify:


- the tolerable risk (the risk accepted by society in a given context based on current values); and then
- the necessary protective measures to manage any risk remaining after protective measures have been taken.

The factors to be taken into account in order to achieve tolerable risk include:

- the selection of equipment with inherently safe design;
- the development of work practices that contribute to risk reduction;
- risk education as part of a DDR information and sensitization campaign;

- effective training; and
- the use of appropriate personal protective equipment.

 **Do you know how to manage risks? Annex G in IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament will show you.**

 *Only explosive ordnance device (EOD) qualified staff, usually military, should handle any form of ammunition and explosives.*

 **Do you want to know specifically about explosive hazards and EOD support? See Annexes D and K in IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament.**

4. The four main phases of disarmament

The disarmament component of a DDR programme should usually consist of four main phases:

- I. Information gathering and operational planning;
- II. Weapons collection or retrieval;
- III. Stockpile management;
- IV. Weapons destruction.


4.1. Phase I: Information gathering and operational planning

Planning depends on gathering information on all the armed forces and groups to be disarmed, and close coordination among key stakeholders. Disarmament is the first stage of the DDR process, and operational decisions made at this stage will have an impact on the whole process.

An independent and neutral assessment of the strength, profile, deployment, arms-to-combatant ratio and number of those associated with armed forces and groups shall be carried out as part of the DDR planning process. Close liaison with the leaders of the armed forces and groups is of particular importance to assess these armed forces and groups as well as weapons distribution and availability.

Finally, it is also vital to determine the extent of the capability needed to carry out disarmament, in terms of personnel, services and equipment. Requests for further assistance from other mission components shall be made as early as possible in the planning stage.

 **OG 3.40 on Mission and Programme Support for DDR, OG 4.40 on UN Military Roles and Responsibilities**


 *Special cases: The disarmament process should be prepared to deal with disabled and chronically ill/wounded combatants, female combatants or those associated with armed forces and groups, children associated with armed forces and groups and dependants. These special groups should be screened, and should be assisted by specialists, such as child protection and gender officers, and medical staff, as appropriate.*

In situations where commanders have disarmed disabled combatants, arrangements should be made to ensure that these weapons are included in the disarmament process, and that any disabled combatants still carrying weapons are able to present themselves for disarmament with minimal hardship to themselves (assistance should be provided if required).

Table 4.10.1: Guidance on information gathering and operational planning

Choice of disarmament approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An assessment of the best approach for collecting weapons (using either static disarmament sites or mobile collection points) shall be carried out.
Team selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The composition of the disarmament team will be heavily influenced by the context, organizational structure and capability of the entity that is responsible for disarmament. ■ An appropriately qualified technical adviser (TA) shall be appointed to the disarmament component planning team during the planning phase. Annex E of IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament lists the qualifications required for this post. ■ Detailed terms of reference (TOR) shall be established for all technical personnel, including locally employed support staff.
Time-lines	<p>Implementation timelines should be developed on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the availability of accurate information about the size of armed forces and groups; ■ the location of armed forces' and groups' units; ■ the number, type and locations of their weapons; ■ the nature, processing capacity and location of pick-up and weapons collection points and disarmament sites; and ■ the amount of time it takes for a military observer (MILOB) or responsible officer to process each ex-combatant. A rehearsal should be held before combatants arrive to assess roughly how long it will take (usually 15–20 minutes).
Weapons survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Data on the number and type of weapons, ammunition and explosives shall be collected, updated and distributed to those involved as operational circumstances evolve. ■ After sufficient, accurate and verifiable data has been collected, collaborative plans should be formulated by the national commission on DDR (NCDDR) and the UN DDR unit/team, outlining the intended locations and site requirements for disarmament operations, the logistic support required and a timetable for operations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are a number of weapons survey methods. It is better to use these than to improvise. See http://www.seesac.org. ■ The weapons survey should be integrated into the overall detailed assessment on DDR.
Risk assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A detailed risk assessment shall be carried out in conjunction with a formal threat analysis for the disarmament component.
Information and sensitization campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An information and sensitization campaign shall be carried out to raise public awareness of the disarmament process. ■ Before the collection phase begins, there should be an increase in the levels of contact and coordination between representatives of the armed forces and groups and the disarmament component team. They should ensure that the information and sensitization campaign reaches each individual combatant. ■ Safety cards provide low-level technical advice to the local population that can be followed without any specialist tools and equipment.

 See section 7 of IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament for more detailed guidance on information collection and operational planning. On a detailed needs assessment, of which a weapons survey is an integral part, see section 2 of OG 3.20 on DDR Programme Design. On the information and sensitization campaign, see OG 4.60 on Public Information and Strategic Communication in Support of DDR and the SALW Awareness Support Pack 2005 (<http://www.seesac.org>).

 Do you need to develop TOR for the disarmament TA? Annex E in IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament provides a model.


 Are you familiar with the basic requirements of a weapons survey? Annex F in IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament provides all information requirements.

 Do you know how to carry out a risk assessment? Annex G in IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament provides detailed guidance.

 Do you know what information a safety card should include? Appendix 1 to Annex D in IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament provides all the required information.


■ *Static and mobile disarmament*

Disarmament can be static or mobile, depending on the security situation. Mobile disarmament has the advantage of permitting a more rapid response than static disarmament.


 When should you use a static disarmament site and when a mobile team? Section 2 of OG 4.20 on Demobilization outlines the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

■ *Eligibility criteria and screening*

Detailed eligibility criteria should be drawn up to define who is eligible to participate in the DDR programme. Screening is carried out to confirm whether combatants or individuals associated with armed forces and groups are, in fact, eligible to participate in the DDR programme.

 **OG 2.30 on Participants, Beneficiaries and Partners, section 2 on eligibility criteria and section 3 on screening**

4.2. Phase II: Weapons collection or retrieval

 *DDR programmes shall avoid attaching monetary value to weapons as a means of encouraging their surrender, to avoid fuelling arms flows.*

The weapons collection or retrieval phase involves carrying out many activities, from establishing buffer zones to the gathering of combatants in pick-up points (PUPs) before they move to weapons collection points (WCPs) and/or disarmament sites, where they will be disarmed. Responsibility for the arrival of combatants at these locations rests with the military leadership of the parties.

■ *Buffer zones and secure corridors*

Buffer zones are an important means of separating the parties to reduce the risk of outbreaks of fighting. They also improve the safety and security of the DDR team during operations. They shall be clearly identified and agreed upon by the parties, and shall be patrolled and observed by UN forces. Liaison officers from armed forces and groups should be included with the UN forces patrolling and observing buffer zones, as this will be an important confidence-building measure. Secure corridors should also be identified, agreed to and patrolled before the movement of combatants to the PUPs, WCPs and disarmament sites.

■ *PUPs, WCPs and disarmament sites*

These are pre-selected and agreed to by the leaders of the parties and the UN military command on the basis of their convenience, security and accessibility for all parties.

Table 4.10.2: Pick-up points, weapons collection points and disarmament sites

Location/stage	What are they?	What should happen?
Pick-up points (PUPs)	Temporary locations where armed forces and groups will gather before moving to the disarmament site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Combatants wait outside the PUP at a clearly marked waiting area. ■ They are briefed to explain what will happen at the WCP/disarmament site. ■ Weapons are cleared of ammunition and made safe. Magazines are removed.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MILOBs screen combatants to identify those carrying ammunition and explosives. ■ A clothing and baggage search of all combatants is carried out. ■ Combatants move to the PUP and have their weapons and ammunition re-screened by MILOBs. ■ Combatants with eligible weapons and safe ammunition pass through the MILOB screening area to the transport area. ■ Combatants move/are transported to the disarmament site.
Weapons collection points (WCPs)	Temporary locations designed for the surrender of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in accordance with safety principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A safety briefing is carried out. ■ A clothing and baggage search of each combatant is carried out. ■ Combatants enter the screening area, where MILOBs identify those with ammunition and explosives. ■ Combatants with ammunition and explosives are directed to the 'ammunitions in' point, while those with unsafe ammunition are directed to the unexploded ordnance (UXO) demolition area. ■ EOD and ammunition specialist examine the ammunition and explosives. Unsafe ammunition is identified for immediate destruction. Safe ammunition is removed to the storage area. ■ The combatant moves to the 'weapons in' point and surrenders the weapon in return for appropriate documentation.
Disarmament sites	Mobile or static locations where each member of the armed force or group will be disarmed and registered before his/her formal demobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Combatants arriving from a PUP gather at a pre-determined location inside the disarmament site. ■ A clothing and baggage search of each combatant may be carried out again, at the discretion of the disarmament site commander. ■ If combatants have not been disarmed at the PUP, they are directed to the WCP, where they surrender weapons, ammunition and explosives in exchange for appropriate documentation. ■ Combatants report to the MILOBs or appropriately trained personnel for screening and initial registration. ■ Those eligible are directed/transported to the demobilization site.



DDR practitioners should apply the guidance above flexibly, as the locations/stages and activities may be combined:

- *Weapons and ammunition may be collected at the PUP; in this case, the PUP and the WCP will be combined in one place, and the procedures for each location will have to be combined and adapted;*
 - *PUPs are more frequently used when disarmament is static and cantonment is used, but they may also be necessary when mobile disarmament is being implemented;*
 - *The WCP may be located inside or outside the disarmament site, whether static or mobile; when the WCP is inside the disarmament site, procedures will not necessarily have to be repeated;*
 - *The disarmament site may also be combined with the demobilization site;*
 - *Although registration is usually part of the demobilization process, it may be initiated or take place at the disarmament site.*
- ***Staffing of a PUP, WCP and disarmament site***

These locations should be staffed by representatives of the UN military component, the integrated DDR unit/team and the NCDDR. Personnel numbers will depend on the expected numbers of participants, but the following will be required:

- MILOBs (male and female);
- a UN military security team (for area protection);
- civilian DDR technical staff;
- local staff from the NCDDR and other local advisers;
- specialist staff (such as child protection officers or officers dealing with the special requirements of women or disabled ex-combatants); and
- representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as service providers.

Personnel levels should be minimized, given the inherent security and explosive safety risks involved. However, a local representative who has the trust of the community shall be present to support with liaison, translation, mobilization of local resources and local media operations. The military officer in charge, in agreement with the senior DDR officer and NCDDR representative, may also allow additional NGO staff and independent representatives of the international community access to the sites for the purposes of transparency and verification. However, entry should be at their own risk.

■ ***Weapons registration and accounting***

It is also important to register weapons so they can be properly accounted for. A computerized management information system is essential for the stockpile man-

agement of the weapons and ammunition, from collection, through storage to destruction and/or redistribution. Each weapon's information (i.e. type, calibre, serial number, country and/or manufacturer monograms/markings) should be registered, as this information may be useful in future weapons tracking.



Do you need a DDR software? Software entitled *Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and SALW Control MIS (DREAM)* is available from UNDP free of charge (<http://www.undp.org/bcpr/>).

■ *Safety*

The safety of DDR personnel, participants and the local civil population shall be ensured at all times. This can be done by:

- ensuring that the physical layout of PUPs, WCPs and disarmament sites shall be, within operational constraints, in accordance with the layouts provided in Annexes I, J and L in IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament;
- distributing safety cards to the local population in the designated area as part of the information and sensitization campaign; and
- deploying appropriately qualified and experienced staff capable of: a) advising on explosive safety; b) certifying ammunition and explosives as 'safe to move'; c) carrying out render safe procedures (RSPs) on unsafe ammunition; and d) advising on 'safety distances' during the collection process. Supporting EOD teams should usually provide these staff.



Annex K of IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament provides detailed information on EOD support.

■ *Foreign combatants*

When foreign combatants are to be repatriated after disarmament, they should be accommodated in a temporary facility capable of meeting basic humanitarian needs within the perimeter of the UN military facility nearest to the border crossing.



On foreign combatants, see OG 5.40 on Cross-border Population Movements.

4.3. Phase III: Stockpile management

Stockpile management consists of those procedures and activities aimed at ensuring safety and security during the accounting, storage, transportation and handling of weapons, ammunition and explosives. This phase shall be as short as possible. The sooner collected weapons and ammunition are destroyed, the better, because:

- security risks are reduced;
- confidence and trust are built; and
- human and financial resources are saved.

DDR practitioners should seek technical advice on the secure and safe storage of weapons, ammunition and explosives. The safety and security of collected weapons should be a primary concern, for humanitarian and political reasons. An explosion in a storage facility leading to casualties has an immediate negative effect on the credibility of the whole DDR process.

Table 4.10.3: Key guidance on stockpile management

Stockpile security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stockpiles should be stored in lockable International Standardization Organization (ISO) containers, within a guarded compound. Dual key procedures should be used: the commanders of armed forces and groups and the UN force should hold the keys to their own locks; the key for a third lock could be in the possession of a community representative.
Storage of weapons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the storage and security of weapons shall be developed by the DDR unit/team with the support of a technical adviser (TA), in accordance with the principles and guidelines contained within SEE RMDS/G¹ 05.30 on Weapons Storage and Security (http://www.seesac.org).
Storage of ammunition and explosives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Detailed SOPs for the storage and security of ammunition and explosives shall be developed by the DDR unit/team with the support of a TA, in accordance with the principles and guidelines contained in RMDS/G 05.40 on Ammunitions and Explosives Storage and Safety, until the formal acceptance of the draft UN Ammunition and Explosives Regulations by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).



The safety distances between storage sites and local inhabited areas should not normally be reduced without the advice of a professionally qualified explosives engineer.



See section 9 in IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament for more detailed guidance on stockpile management.

4.4. Phase IV: Weapons destruction

Before the disarmament process starts, there should be an agreement among all parties and other key stakeholders about what will be done with the collected weapons and ammunition. It is strongly recommended that the parties adhere to the principle of automatic destruction of all collected weapons, which the UN recognizes as best practice.

However, applying this principle may be more difficult when a security sector reform (SSR) programme is under way, as such a programme may recommend that some of the collected weapons and ammunition be converted for use by the legitimate security forces. Where weapons are retained for this purpose, the government must be seen as legitimate and impartial, and should develop a clear and effective plan for weapons retention.



Weapons retention or redistribution: DDR practitioners should exercise extreme caution when dealing with the issue of weapons retention or redistribution to security forces. Too often, in the absence of sufficient institutional capacity or stockpile control, collected weapons are not secured, and end up being stolen. Therefore weapons collected in a DDR process should be destroyed if no such capacity exists, particularly if their destruction will contribute to creating trust and confidence in a peace process. However, where the government has demonstrated a commitment to security sector review and reform, DDR practitioners should support this approach.

The destruction of weapons shall be approached as a separate issue from the destruction of ammunition and explosives. In comparative terms, the destruction of weapons is much simpler and safer than the destruction of ammunition. The destruction of ammunition and explosives is a highly specialist task that can only be safely, efficiently and effectively carried out by appropriately trained and qualified staff.



Do you need to learn more about stockpile destruction? IMAS² 11.10 on Stockpile Destruction, 11.20 on Open Burning and Open Detonation (OBOD) Operations and 11.30 on National Planning Guidelines contain standard guidelines for the destruction of most ammunitions and explosives (<http://www.mineactionstandards.org>).

Table 4.10.4: Key guidance on the destruction of weapons

<p>Techniques and technologies</p>	<p>There are some 12 different techniques to destroy weapons. The technique should be selected on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the type of weapons; ■ the quantity of weapons; ■ the available local resources and technology; ■ any financial considerations; ■ the infrastructure available for moving weapons; and ■ any security constraints. <p>Whatever the destruction technique used, a public destruction ceremony with mass media coverage should be organized, as this is highly symbolic, and helps to build the confidence of the public in the DDR programme and the peace process (see the tool icon after this table).</p>
<p>Planning and operations sequence</p>	<p>The planning and implementation of destruction should follow a certain sequence of events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the establishment of the type and quantity of weapons to be destroyed; ■ the selection of the most suitable destruction option based on technical advice;

- the establishment of the financial costs of destruction (technical advice will be necessary to ensure that a fair price is established if a commercial option is selected);
- the development of a public information and sensitization campaign;
- the informing of media, NGOs and international organizations of the date and location of the destruction operation;
- the establishment of a security plan for the movement of weapons and destruction operations;
- the carrying out of any necessary weapons pre-processing operations, such as the removal of components and accounting procedures;
- the movement of weapons to the destruction location, ensuring that all appropriate security measures are in place to protect the weapons during transit;
- the establishment of an effective and accurate accounting system at the destruction facility;
- the physical destruction of the weapons;
- the monitoring and verification of the destruction operation carried out by international observers, media and NGOs; and
- the maintenance of destruction records within the national authority.



Do you want to learn about the destruction techniques that exist and their advantages and disadvantages? Annex M of IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament provides a matrix with detailed information.

5. Summary of key guidance on disarmament

- ✓ National governments have the right and responsibility to apply their own national standards to all disarmament operations on their territory, but should act in compliance with international and regional arms control conventions, standards and best practices.
- ✓ The safety and security of UN and non-UN personnel (both local and international), participants and communities are essential in disarmament programmes. The humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity shall always apply. A concept of ‘proportional and fair disarmament’ should be applied at every opportunity.
- ✓ DDR programmes shall avoid attaching monetary value to weapons as a means of encouraging their surrender, to avoid fuelling arms flows.
- ✓ Before the disarmament process starts, there should be an agreement among all parties and other key stakeholders about what will be done with the collected

weapons. The UN recognizes that the automatic destruction of all collected weapons is best practice. However, the decision to retain weapons should be respected where legitimate and impartial governments are restructuring the national armed forces as part of security sector reform.

- ✓ Each combatant's eligibility for DDR will be established during the disarmament process. It is therefore essential that the eligibility criteria be agreed upon between the parties and key stakeholders before this stage starts.