

OG 4.40: UN Military Roles and Responsibilities

Objectives

This module will:

- ✓ describe the military component of UN peacekeeping operations;
- ✓ outline the possible contribution by the military component to a DDR programme; and
- ✓ highlight additional military capabilities during pre-deployment planning.

1. Introduction

The military component of a UN peacekeeping operation often possesses a wide range of capabilities that could be key to a DDR programme. As military resources and assets for peacekeeping operations are limited and are often meant for many different purposes, it is important to identify, early in the planning stages, which DDR tasks can best be carried out by the military component of a peacekeeping operation.

Although the military component of a peacekeeping operation is most often requested to provide security for a DDR programme, there are many other areas in which it can be helpful, such as:

- information gathering and reporting;
- information distribution and sensitization;
- programme monitoring and reporting;
- specialized weapons and ammunition expertise; and
- logistic support.

Additionally, the Military Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) also assists with all aspects of pre-deployment planning, such as participating in initial technical assessments and contributing to the formulation of the concept of operations.



For the successful employment of any military capability in a DDR programme, it is essential that it is included in planning, is part of the endorsed mission operational requirement, is specifically mandated and is properly resourced. If this is not the case, the wider security-related function of the military component will be badly affected.

2. The military component

Although some small UN military observer missions are still in progress, most peacekeeping operations, including those with a DDR mandate, rely on a mix of unarmed military observers and a number of armed troops that are collectively referred to as the peacekeeping force.

To better draw on the potential contribution of the military component to DDR, it is important first to understand the general function of the military component in a peacekeeping operation and how it is usually structured:

- *Function:* The main functions of the military component are to observe and report on security-related issues and to provide security;
- *Command:* A peacekeeping force is commanded by a force commander who, although an active duty member of his/her parent armed forces, is a salaried UN staff member. All Member States retain national command over their own military contingents (as agreed in negotiations that take place in UN Headquarters before deployment);
- *Composition:* The military component can be made up of three groups, as Table 4.40.1 shows:

Table 4.40.1: The composition of the military component

1. Formed units or contingents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ These usually include armoured, infantry, aviation, engineering and various support units, some of which can provide logistics support, including specialists in explosive ordnance device (EOD) and weapons destruction. ■ The tasking of the logistic support, aviation and engineering units is controlled by the mission's chief of integrated support services (i.e. a civilian who is not part of the military component).
2. Military observers (MILOBs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MILOBs are unarmed officers normally provided by Member States for 12 months. ■ They operate in small teams of between two and six. Where possible, MILOBs are incorporated into the force command structure.
3. Staff officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ These are individual military officers who serve in staff posts, both within the force headquarters and in various specialized positions where they are integrated with civilian staff, e.g. in sections such as Integrated Support Services and DDR.

3. The military contribution to DDR

If the mandate and concept of operations lay down specific tasks for military support to DDR, then the military components needs to be resourced and equipped appropriately. It is preferable to make a single recommendation for the force require-

ment rather than going back to the UN Security Council for additional forces once a mission has started.



Agreement on using UN peacekeepers as part of the DDR programme should be discussed with the national parties at the earliest possible stage.

Military capability, particularly in specialized capacities such as communications, aviation, engineering, medical and logistic support, is often difficult for the UN to obtain, and may be used only where it is uniquely able to fulfil the task at hand. If civilian sources can meet an endorsed operational requirement and the military component of a mission is fully employed, civilian resources should be used.

Table 4.40.2: Military component contributions to DDR programme

<p>Security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This is provided by armed UN peacekeepers. ■ Unarmed MILOBs can assist in contributing to early warning and wider information operations. ■ The military component can provide security for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ disarmament and demobilization sites, whether semi-permanent or mobile; □ collected and stored weapons and ammunition; □ routes that will be used by DDR participants; and □ the transport of DDR participants back to their communities. ■ Planners should whenever possible use formed units or contingents that have already been deployed, rather than deploying other formed units or contingents for short-term tasks.
<p>Information gathering and reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The military component can seek information on the location, strength and intentions of ex-combatants who may or will become part of a DDR programme. ■ It can be used to detect whether commanders within armed forces and groups are withholding information about their rank and file. ■ It can help to identify or confirm the presence of women, children or disabled people within an armed force or group, particularly if these groups are being underreported. ■ The Joint Operations Centre (JOC) and Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC) within the military component should manage the information gathering and reporting task.
<p>Information and sensitization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The military component can assist in the roll-out of public information and sensitization campaigns on DDR. This is particularly useful when command, control and communications in armed forces and groups are poor. However, any information campaign should be planned and monitored by the DDR unit/team and wider mission public information staff.

Programme monitoring and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The military component can assist in monitoring and reporting on aspects of programme progress. This should be managed by the DDR unit/team in conjunction with JOC.
Specialized weapon and ammunition expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some military units possess specialized ammunition and weapon expertise that may be useful to the disarmament process of DDR. Early and comprehensive planning should identify whether such technical assistance is a requirement, as not all military units possess capabilities to destroy or safely and securely store weapons and ammunition.
Logistic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The military component can provide logistic support in coordination with those accountable for the integrated services support to a mission.

Military staff officers can also fill posts in an integrated DDR unit/team, depending on DDR programme requirements. The following posts are possible:

- Mil SO₁ DDR – military liaison (lieutenant-colonel);
- Mil SO₂ DDR – military liaison (major); and
- Mil SO₂ DDR – disarmament and weapons control (major).



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4. Cooperation and coordination between the military component and civilian DDR unit/team

DDR programmes call for high levels of cooperation and coordination between military and civilian actors. The military component can support the disarmament process, demobilization often requires the involvement of both military and civilian actors, and reintegration is the responsibility of civilians.

Obstacles to cooperation and coordination originate from the different institutional cultures and mandates of the military component and the civilian DDR unit/team. Both should therefore:

- understand each other's roles and limits, to determine when to work together;
- become familiar with the different working styles of one another to limit misconceptions; and
- create the necessary coordination mechanism to share relevant information regularly and carry out joint planning.

5. Pre-deployment planning

The Military Division of DPKO can also contribute to DDR planning before a peacekeeping operation is deployed.

Table 4.40.3: Pre-deployment activities carried out by the Military Division of DPKO

<p>Contingency planning for the military contribution to a possible DDR programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This will normally be carried out by staff tasked with broader planning within the Military Planning Service (MPS) of the Military Division, as the UN does not possess military staff specifically dedicated to DDR planning.
<p>Initial technical assessments and detailed assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Military Division will participate, when required and available, in initial technical assessments and detailed assessments to assist in determining the military operational requirement most relevant to a DDR programme.
<p>Mission concept of operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Military Division will assist in the formulation of a mission concept of operations by identifying the operational requirement for military support to a DDR programme.
<p>Force Generation Service of the Military Division of DPKO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This unit is responsible for negotiating military contributions from Member States on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the operational requirement. Formal negotiations will not start until a mandate is received from the Security Council. ■ It designs a force structure with an element required only for the disarmament and demobilization phases. However, DDR operations are likely to demand that any force be dispersed (perhaps in platoon- or company-sized groups) in operational areas where other battalions have already been deployed under a separate chain of command for a different range of tasks. Coordination should exist among these different force structures.
<p>Standby arrangement system managed by the Military Division of DPKO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This system allows Member States, or groups of Member States, to place force packages on standby for specific activities, including DDR. ■ A DDR package could consist of: planning officers, public information officers, MILOBs, units designed to provide security specific to DDR sites, construction engineers, camp management staff, EOD and weapon destruction specialists, and language assistants. ■ The military component of peacekeeping operations usually includes an EOD capability within each battalion deployed, for self-protection. This capability, considered a force multiplier, may also be useful for the destruction of weapons and ammunition in a DDR programme.



OG 3.10 on Integrated DDR Planning: Processes and Structures

6. Summary of key guidance on UN military roles and responsibilities

- ✓ The military component of a peacekeeping operation can contribute to the DDR process in different phases and at different stages. DDR practitioners should understand how the military component functions and what its capabilities are to be able to use this contribution.
- ✓ DDR programmes call for high levels of cooperation and coordination between the military component and the DDR unit/team. Both should understand each other's roles and limits, and create the necessary coordination mechanisms for information sharing and joint planning as needed.
- ✓ Early and joint planning is essential to ensure that the military component will be resourced and equipped appropriately to support specific DDR tasks.