

2.20 The Politics of DDR

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2.20 The Politics of DDR

Summary

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is not only a technical undertaking. Many aspects of the DDR process will influence, and be influenced by, political dynamics. Understanding the political dynamics that influence DDR processes requires knowledge of the historical and political context, the actors and stakeholders (armed and unarmed), and the conflict drivers, including local, national and regional aspects that may interact and feed into an armed conflict.

Armed groups often mobilize for political reasons and/or in response to a range of security, socioeconomic or other grievances. Peace negotiations and processes provide warring parties with a way to end violence and address their grievances through peaceful means. Armed forces may also need to be factored into peace agreements and proportionality between armed forces and groups – in terms of DDR support – taken into account.

DDR practitioners may provide support to the mediation of peace agreements and to the subsequent oversight and implementation of the relevant parts of these agreements. DDR practitioners can also advise mediators and facilitators so as to ensure that peace agreements incorporate realistic DDR-related clauses, that the parties have a common understanding of the outcome of the DDR process and how this will be implemented, and that DDR processes are not undertaken in isolation but are integrated with other aspects of a peace process, since the success of each is mutually reinforcing.

All peace agreements contain security provisions to address the control and management of violence in various forms including right-sizing, DDR, and/or other forms of security coordination and control. When and if a given peace agreement demands a DDR process, the national political framework for that particular DDR process is often provided by a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that seeks to address political and security issues. Without such an agreement, warring parties are unlikely to agree to measures that reduce their ability to use military force to reach their goals. In a CPA, it is very common for DDR programmes to be tied to ceasefire provisions and ‘final security arrangements’. If armed groups have political aspirations, the chances of the successful implementation of a CPA can be improved if DDR processes are sensitively designed to support the transformation of these groups into political entities.

DDR processes may also follow local-level agreements. Local politics can be as important in driving armed conflict as grievances against the State. By focusing on the latter, national-level peace agreements may not address or resolve local conflicts. Therefore, these conflicts may continue even when national-level peace agreements have been signed and implemented. Local-level peace agreements may take a number of different forms, including (but not limited to) local non-aggression pacts between armed groups, deals regarding access to specific areas and community violence reduction (CVR) agreements. DDR practitioners should assess whether local DDR processes remain at the local level, or whether local- and national-level dynamics should be linked in a common multilevel approach.

Finally, DDR processes can also be undertaken in the absence of peace agreements. In these instances, DDR interventions may be designed to contribute to stabilization, to make the returns of stability more tangible or to create more conducive environments for peace agreements (see IDDRS 2.10 on The UN Approach to DDR). These interventions should not be reactive and ad hoc, but should be carefully planned in advance in accordance with a predefined strategy.

1. Module scope and objectives

This module introduces the political dynamics of DDR and provides an overview of how to analyse and better understand them so as to develop politically sensitive DDR processes. It discusses the role of DDR practitioners in the negotiation of local and national peace agreements, the role of transitional and final security arrangements, and how practitioners may work to generate political will for DDR among warring parties. Finally, this chapter discusses the transformation of armed groups into political parties and the political dynamics of DDR in active conflict settings.¹

2. Terms, definitions and abbreviations

Annex A contains a list of abbreviations used in these standards. A complete glossary of all the terms, definitions and abbreviations used in the IDDRS series is given in IDDRS 1.20.

In the IDDRS series, the words ‘shall’, ‘should’, ‘may’, ‘can’ and ‘must’ are used to indicate the intended degree of compliance with the standards laid down. This use is consistent with the language used in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards and guidelines:

- a. ‘shall’ is used to indicate requirements, methods or specifications that are to be applied in order to conform to the standard;
- b. ‘should’ is used to indicate the preferred requirements, methods or specifications;
- c. ‘may’ is used to indicate a possible method or course of action;
- d. ‘can’ is used to indicate a possibility and capability;
- e. ‘must’ is used to indicate an external constraint or obligation.

3. Introduction

The impact of DDR on the political landscape is influenced by the context, the history of the conflict, and the structures and motivations of the warring parties. Some armed groups may have few political motivations or demands. Others, however, may fight against the State, seeking political power. Armed conflict may also be more localized, linked to local politics and issues such as access to land. There may also be complex interactions between political dynamics and conflict drivers at the local, national and regional levels.

1 Guidance on how the designation of terrorist groups and individuals by the United Nations Security Council specifically affects the politics of DDR will be developed at a later stage.

In order to support a peaceful resolution to armed conflict, DDR practitioners can support the mediation, oversight and implementation of peace agreements. Local-level peace agreements may take many forms, including (but not limited to) local non-aggression pacts between armed groups, deals regarding access to specific areas and CVR agreements. National-level peace agreements may also vary, ranging from cease-fire agreements to Comprehensive Peace Agreements (CPAs) with provisions for the establishment of a political power-sharing system. In this context, the role of former warring parties in interim political institutions may include participation in the interim administration as well as in other political bodies or movements, such as being represented in national dialogues. DDR can support this process, including by helping to demilitarize politics and supporting the transformation of armed groups into political parties.

DDR is not only a technical endeavour – many aspects of the DDR process will influence, and be influenced by, political dynamics. For example, armed groups may refuse to disarm and demobilize until they are sure that their political demands will be met. Having control over DDR processes can constitute a powerful political position, and, as a result, groups or individuals may attempt to manipulate these processes for political gain. Furthermore, during a conflict armed groups may become politically empowered and can challenge established political systems and structures, create alternative political arrangements or take over functions usually reserved for the State, including as security providers. Measures to disband armed groups can provide space for the restoration of the State in places where it was previously absent, and therefore can have a strong impact upon the security and political environment.

DDR is not only a technical endeavour – many aspects of the DDR process will influence, and be influenced by, political dynamics.

The political limitations of DDR should also be considered. Integrated DDR processes can facilitate engagement with armed groups but will have limited impact unless parallel efforts are undertaken to address the reasons why these groups felt it necessary to mobilize in the first place, their current and prospective security concerns, and their expectations for the future. Overcoming these political limitations requires recognition of the strong linkages between DDR and other aspects of a peace process, including broader political arrangements, transitional justice and reconciliation, and peacebuilding activities, without which there will be no sustainable peace. Importantly, national-level peace agreements may not be appropriate to resolve ongoing local-level conflicts or regional conflicts, and it will be necessary for DDR practitioners to develop strategies and select DDR-related tools that are appropriate to each level.

4. Guiding principles

IDDRS 2.10 on The UN Approach to DDR sets out the main principles that guide all aspects of DDR processes. This section outlines how these principles apply to the political dynamics of DDR:

4.1 People-centred

A people-centred approach shall be followed. This approach must take into account the needs and positions of all stakeholders (Government, armed and unarmed opposition, the population and the international community) in a sensitive manner and seek to understand and accommodate them.

4.2 Gender-responsive and inclusive

DDR processes shall be gender-responsive and -inclusive, and at all stages take into account the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution. DDR practitioners shall advance substantive gender equality before, during and after conflict and ensure that women's diverse experiences are fully integrated into all peacebuilding, peacemaking and reconstruction processes.

4.3 Flexible, accountable and transparent

Accountability, transparency and flexibility shall be maintained not only when holding stakeholders to their commitments, but also when ensuring that the process designed is appropriate for the context in which it is to be implemented.

4.4 Integrated

It is essential to encourage unity of effort in the analysis, design and implementation of politically sensitive DDR processes. This emphasis must start with ensuring that those negotiating a peace agreement are properly advised so as to reach technically sound agreements and to integrate DDR processes with other relevant parts of the peace process.

5. Understanding and analyzing the political dynamics of DDR

5.1 Contextual considerations

To understand the political dynamics of DDR processes, a thorough contextual analysis is required. In mission settings, such analyses are undertaken by UN peace operations, special political missions or offices. In non-mission settings, contextual analysis forms an integral part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) process.

In both mission and non-mission settings, the analysis of the political dynamics of a DDR process forms just one part of a broader situational analysis. It may therefore be linked to conflict and development analysis (CDA) or other analysis that is requested/mandatory in the UN system. The sections immediately below focus only on the contextual analysis of the political dynamics of DDR processes. This type of analysis should examine the following factors:

5.1.1. The political and historical context

Understanding the political dynamics that influence DDR processes requires knowledge of the historical and political context. A summary of relevant factors to consider can be found in Table 1 below.

5.1.2 The structures and motivations of armed forces and groups

The structures and motivations of armed forces and groups should be assessed.

TABLE 1: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE DDR PROCESSES

HISTORICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What is the genesis and history of the conflict?■ What past peace efforts and DDR processes have taken place, and what was the result?■ Who are the connectors and dividers, and who are the supporters?■ What are the political, ethnic, religious, gender or other dimensions of the conflict?■ What expectations do these dimensions raise, and how do they influence perceptions of DDR, including those of the international community and donors?■ What lessons learned can be drawn from past processes and applied to a new peace and DDR process?
CONTEXTUAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What is the type of conflict (e.g., secessionist, inter-state, intra-state)?■ If intra-state, what is the role of external actors in the conflict?■ What were/are the key interests of these external actors?■ How is the conflict fought (e.g., type of warfare)?■ How did the conflict end (e.g., negotiated settlement, military victory)?■ Were the reasons for fighting met entirely or partially as a result of the conflict?
STRUCTURAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What are the political and military structures in place?■ How strong are these structures?■ How do the armed forces and groups fit in or how do they see themselves fitting into these structures?■ What new structures may be established as a part of the peace process, and what role will the warring parties have in them?■ What is their role in, or influence on, the DDR process?

ASPIRATIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the armed forces' and groups' political or other aspirations? ■ How do they see their political future post-conflict? ■ What measures have been included in the peace agreement to respond to them (e.g., power-sharing arrangements, devolution of power to regions, recognition of minority groups, etc.)? ■ Do they have a political platform?
OPERATIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How does the political environment and the peace process affect implementation of DDR? ■ Which signatory movements will participate in the DDR process and which non-signatory groups remain outside of it?
INTERNAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the internal dynamics of each of the armed forces and groups? ■ How are they organized and structured (command and control, rules of engagement, etc.)? ■ Who are their leaders? ■ What is their ethnic, religious, gender or other composition? Are they factionalized? ■ Whom do they represent, and how legitimate is this representation? ■ What are their ideologies, political values, attitudes, norms and culture? ■ What are their possible or stated political aspirations? What relationship do they have with existing political actors or bodies? ■ What are their revenue streams? ■ What national and international support do they have?
TRANSFORMATIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How do DDR practitioners need to work around/ take into consideration the transformation of armed groups into something else (e.g., civil associations, political parties, lobbying groups)? ■ Are there provisions on this in the peace agreement? Are there approaches that could assist with this transformation? ■ How will this transformation impact the national/ local political scene, and how will it be viewed by other political players, including the Government?

It should be kept in mind, however, that these structures and motivations may vary over time and at the individual and collective levels. For example, certain individuals may have been motivated to join armed groups for reasons of opportunism rather than political goals. Some opportunist individuals may become progressively politicized or, alternatively, those with political motives may become more opportunist. Crafting an effective DDR process requires an understanding of these different and changing motivations. Furthermore, the stated motives of warring parties and their members may differ significantly from their actual motives or be against international law and principles.

As explained in more detail in Annex B, potential motives may include one or several of the following:

- **Political** – seeking to impose or protect a political system, ideology or party.
- **Social** – seeking to bring about changes in social status, roles or balances of power, discrimination and marginalization.
- **Economic** – seeking a redistribution or accumulation of wealth, often coupled with joining to escape poverty and to provide for the family.
- **Security driven** – seeking to protect a community or group from a real or perceived threat.
- **Cultural/spiritual** – seeking to protect or impose values, ideas or principles.
- **Religious** – seeking to advance religious values, customs and ideas.
- **Material** – seeking to protect material resources.
- **Opportunistic** – seeking to leverage a situation to achieve any of the above.

It is important to undertake a thorough analysis of armed forces and groups so as to better understand the DDR target groups and to design DDR processes that maximize political buy-in. Analysis of armed forces and groups should include the following:

- **Leadership:** Including associated political leaders or structures (see below) and other persons who may have influence over the warring parties. The analysis should take into account external actors, including possible foreign supporters but also exiled leaders or others who may have some control over armed groups. It should also consider how much control the leadership has over the combatants and to what extent the leadership is representative of its members. Both control and representativeness can change over time.
- **Internal group dynamics:** Including the balance between an organization's political and military wings, interactions between prominent members or factions within an armed force or group and how they influence the behaviour of the organization, internal conflict patterns and potential fragmentation, the presence of female fighters or women associated with armed forces and groups (WAAFG), gender norms in the group, and the existence and pervasiveness of sexual violence.
- **Associated political leaders and structures:** Including whether warring parties have a separate political branch or are integrated politico-military movements and how this shapes their agenda. Are women involved in political structures, and if so to what extent? Armed groups with separate political structures or a history of political engagement prior to the conflict have sometimes been more successful at transforming themselves into political parties, although this potential may erode during a prolonged conflict.

- **Associated religious leaders:** Are religious leaders or personalities associated with the armed groups? What role could they play in peace negotiations? Do they have influence on the warring parties, and how can they help to shape the outcome of peace efforts?
- **Linkages with their base:** Is a given armed group close to a political base or a population, and how do these linkages influence the group? Has this support been weakened by the use of certain tactics or actions (e.g., mass atrocities), or will repression of its base influence the armed group? Will efforts to demobilize combatants affect the armed group's relations with its base or otherwise push it to change tactics – for instance eschewing violence so as to mobilize a political base that would otherwise reject violence.
- **Linkages with local, national and regional elites:** Including influential individuals or groups who hold sway over the armed forces and groups. These could include business people or communities, religious or traditional leaders or institutions such as trade unions or cultural groupings. The diaspora may also be an important actor, providing political and economic support to communities and/or armed groups.
- **External support:** Are there regional and/or broader international actors or networks that provide political and financial support to armed groups, including on the basis of geopolitical interests? This might include State sponsors, diaspora or political exiles, transnational criminal networks or ideological affiliation and 'franchising' with foreign, often extremist, armed groups.

5.1.3 Conflict outcomes

The way a conflict ends can influence the political dynamics of DDR. The following scenarios should be considered:

- **A clear victor:** This usually results in a 'victor's peace', where the winner can 'impose' demands on the party that lost the conflict. This may mean that the armed structures of the victor are preserved, while the losing party will be the one targeted for DDR. Less emphasis may be placed on the reintegration of the defeated combatants, and the stigma of being an ex-combatant or person formerly associated with an armed force or group (including children associated with armed forces and groups [CAAFG] and WAAFG) is compounded by that of having been a part of a defeated group, resulting in increased marginalization, exclusion and discrimination. The victorious group may seek to dominate the new security structures.
- **A negotiated process:** At the national level, this is the most common form of conflict resolution and often results in a comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) that addresses the political aspects of a conflict and might include provisions for DDR (this is considered a prerequisite for a DDR programme). Negotiated processes can also lead to local-level peace agreements, which can be followed by DDR-related tools such as CVR and transitional weapons and ammunition management (WAM) or reintegration support. DDR processes that are the outcome of negotiations (whether local or national) are more likely to be acceptable to warring parties. However, unless expert advice is provided, the DDR-related clauses in such agreements can be unrealistic.

- **Partial peace:** In some conflicts the multiplicity of armed groups may result in peace processes that are not fully inclusive, since some of the armed groups are excluded from or refuse to sign the agreement. This can be a disincentive for signatory armed groups to disarm and demobilize due to fear for their security and that of the population they represent, concerns over loss of territory to a non-signatory armed group or uncertainty about how their political position might be affected should other armed groups eventually join the peace process.

5.1.4 Local, national, regional and international dynamics

National-level peace agreements will not always put an end to local-level conflicts. Local agendas – at the level of the individual, family, clan, municipality, community, district or ethnic group – can at least partly drive the continuation of violence. Some incidents of localized violence, such as clashes between rivals over positions of traditional authority between two clans, will require primarily local solutions. However, other types of localized armed conflict may be intrinsically linked to the national level, and more amenable to top-down intervention. An example would be competition over political roles at the subfederal or district level. Experience shows that international interventions often neglect local mediation and conflict resolution, focusing instead on national-level cleavages. However, in many instances a combination of local and national conflict or dispute resolution mechanisms, including traditional ones, may be required. For these reasons, local political dynamics should be assessed.

The conflict may also have international links beyond the immediate region. These may include proxy wars, economic interests, and political support to one or several groups, as well as links to organized crime networks.

In addition to these local- and national-level dynamics, DDR practitioners should also understand and address cross-border/transnational conflict causes and dynamics, including their gender dimensions, as well as the interdependencies of armed groups with regional actors. In some cases, foreign armed groups may receive support from a third country, have bases across a border, or draw recruits and support from communities that straddle a border. These contexts often require approaches to repatriate foreign combatants and persons associated with foreign armed groups. Such programmes should be accompanied by reintegration support in the former combatant's country of origin (see also IDDRS 5.40 on Cross-Border Population Movements).

Regional dimensions may also involve the presence of regional or international forces operating in the country. Their impact on DDR should be assessed, and the confluence of DDR efforts and ongoing military operations against non-signatory movements may need to be managed. DDR processes are voluntary and shall not be conflated with counter-insurgency operations or used to achieve counter-insurgency objectives.

The conflict may also have international links beyond the immediate region. These may include proxy wars, economic interests, and political support to one or several groups, as well as links to organized crime networks. Those involved may have specific interests to protect in the conflict and might favour one side over the other, or a specific outcome. DDR processes will not usually address these factors directly, but their success may be influenced by the need to engage politically or otherwise with these external actors.

5.1.5 DDR in conflict contexts or in contexts with multiple armed groups

As outlined in IDDRS 2.10 on The UN Approach to DDR, integrated DDR processes may be pursued even when conflict is ongoing. In these contexts, DDR practitioners will need to assess how their interventions may affect local, national, regional and international political dynamics. For example, will the implementation of CVR projects contribute to the restoration and reinvigoration of (dormant) local government (see IDDRS 2.30 on Community Violence Reduction)? Will local-level interventions impact political dynamics only at the local level, or will they also have an impact on national-level dynamics?

In conflict settings, DDR practitioners should also assess the political dynamics created by the presence of multiple armed groups. Complex contexts involving multiple armed groups can increase the pressure for a peace agreement to succeed (including through successful DDR and the transformation of armed groups into political parties) if this provides an example and an incentive for other armed groups to enter into a negotiated solution.

6. Fostering political support for DDR

Governments and armed groups are key stakeholders in peace processes. Despite this, the commitment of these parties cannot be taken for granted and steps should be taken to build their support for the DDR process. It will be important to consider various options and approaches at each stage of the DDR process so as to ensure that next steps are politically acceptable and therefore more likely to be attractive to the parties. If there is insufficient political support for DDR, its efficacy may be undermined. In order to foster political will for DDR, the following factors should be taken into account:

6.1 The political aspirations of armed groups

Participation in peacetime politics may be a key demand of groups, and the opportunity to do so may be used as an incentive for them to enter into a peace agreement. If armed groups, armed forces or wartime Governments are to become part of the political process, they should transform themselves into entities able to operate in a transitional political administration or an electoral system.

Leaders may be reluctant to give up their command and therefore lose their political base before they are able to make the shift to a political party that can re-absorb this constituency. At the same time, they may be unwilling to give up their wartime structures until they are sure that the political provisions of an agreement will be implemented.

DDR processes should consider the parties' political motivations. Doing so can reassure armed groups that they can retain the ability to pursue their political agendas through peaceful means and that they can therefore safely disband their military structures.

The post-conflict demilitarization of politics and institutions goes beyond DDR practitioners' mandates, yet DDR processes should not ignore the political aspirations of armed groups and their members.

The post-conflict demilitarization of politics and institutions goes beyond DDR practitioners' mandates, yet DDR processes should not ignore the political aspirations of armed groups and their members. Such aspirations may include participating in political life by being able to vote, being a member of a political party that represents their ideas and aims, or running for office.

For some armed groups, participation in politics may involve transformation into a political party, a merger or alignment with an existing party, or the candidacy of former members in elections.

The transformation of an armed group into a political party may appear to be incompatible with the aim of disbanding military structures and breaking their chains of command and control because a political party may seek to build upon wartime command structures. Practitioners and political leaders need to consider the effects of a DDR process that seeks to disband and break the structures of an armed group that aims to become a political party. Attention should be paid as to whether the planned DDR process could help or hinder this transformation and whether this could support or undermine the wider peace process. DDR processes may need to be adapted accordingly.

6.2 Ensuring adequate provisions for DDR in peace agreements

The DDR-related clauses included within peace agreements should be realistic and appropriate for the setting. In CPAs, the norm is to include a commitment to undertake a DDR programme. The details, including provisions regarding female combatants, WAAFG and CAAFG, are usually developed later in a national DDR programme document. Local-level peace agreements will not necessarily include a DDR programme, but may include a range of DDR-related tools such as CVR and transitional WAM (see IDDRS 2.10 on The UN Approach to DDR). Provisions that legitimize entitlements for those who have been members of armed forces and groups should be avoided (see IDDRS 2.40 on Reintegration as Part of Sustaining Peace).

Regardless of the type of peace agreement, mediators and signatories should have a minimum understanding of DDR, including the preconditions and principles of gender-responsive and child-friendly DDR (see IDDRS 2.10 on The UN Approach to DDR). Where necessary they should call upon DDR experts to build capacity and knowledge among all of the actors involved and to advise them on the negotiation of relevant and realistic DDR provisions.

6.3 Building and ensuring integrated DDR processes

In some instances, integrated DDR processes should be closely linked to other parts of a peace process. For example, DDR programmes may be connected to security sector reform and transitional justice (see IDDRS 6.10 on DDR and Security Sector Reform and IDDRS 6.20 on Transitional Justice and DDR). Unless these other activities are clear, the signatories cannot decide on their participation in DDR with full knowledge of the options available to them and may block the process. Donors and other partners may also find it difficult to support DDR processes when there are many unknowns. It is therefore important to ensure that stakeholders have a minimum level of understanding and agreement on other related activities, as this will affect their decisions on whether or how to participate in a DDR process.

Information on associated activities is usually included in a CPA; however, in the absence of such provisions, the push to disarm and demobilize forces combined with a lack of certainty on fundamental issues such as justice, security and integration can undermine confidence in the process. In such cases an assessment should be made of the opportunities and risks of starting or delaying a DDR process, and the consequences shall be made clear to UN senior leadership, who will take a decision on this. If the decision is to postpone a programme, donors and budgeting bodies shall be kept informed.

There may also be a need to link local and national conflict resolution and mediation so that one does not undermine the other.

6.4 Ensuring a common understanding of DDR

Although the negotiating parties may not need to know the details of a DDR process when they sign a peace agreement, they should have a shared understanding of the principles and outcomes of the DDR process and how this will be implemented.

It is important for the parties to a peace agreement to have a common understanding of what DDR involves, including the gender dimensions and requirements and protections for children. This may not always be the case, especially if the stakeholders have not all had the same opportunity to learn about DDR. This is particularly true for groups that may be difficult to access because of security or geography, or because they are considered 'off limits' due to their ideology. The ability to hold meaningful discussions on DDR may therefore require capacity-building with the parties to balance the levels of knowledge and ensure a common understanding of the process. In contexts where DDR has been implemented before, this history can affect perceptions of future DDR activities, and there may be a need to review and manage expectations and clarify differences between past and planned processes.

contexts where DDR has been implemented before, this history can affect perceptions of future DDR activities, and there may be a need to review and manage expectations and clarify differences between past and planned processes.

While DDR is a crucial process, it is but one part of a broader political and peacebuilding strategy.

The capacity-building and provision of expertise extends to the mediation teams and international supporters of the peace process (envoys, mediators, facilitators, sponsors and donors) who must have access to experts who can guide them in designing appropriate DDR provisions.

6.5 Ensuring international support for DDR

International actors, including the UN, Member States and other concerned stakeholders must understand the need to politically support DDR processes. They must also ensure that the agreements reached are responsive to the parties' demands, fair and implementable, and create a supportive environment for DDR.

Donors and UN budgetary bodies should understand that DDR is a long and expensive undertaking. While DDR is a crucial process, it is but one part of a broader political and peacebuilding strategy. Hence, the objectives and expectations of DDR must be realistic. A partial commitment to such an undertaking is insufficient to allow for a sustainable DDR process and may cause harm. This support must extend to an understanding of the difficult circumstances in which DDR is implemented and the need to sometimes

wait until the conditions are right to start and assure that funding and support is available for a long-term process. However, there is often a push to spend allocated funding even when the conditions for a process are not in place. This financial pressure should be better understood, and budgetary rules and regulations should not precipitate the premature launch of a DDR process, as this will only undermine its success.

7. Peace mediation and DDR

DDR processes are often preceded by a period of negotiation and the establishment of a peace agreement.

7.1 Local peace agreements

Local peace agreements can take many different forms and may include local non-aggression pacts between armed groups, deals regarding access to specific areas, CVR agreements and reintegration support for those who have left the armed groups. These local agreements may sometimes be one part of a broader peace strategy. A large range of actors can be involved in the negotiation of these agreements, including informal local mediation committees, Government-established local peace and reconciliation committees, religious actors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the UN. Local capacities for peace should also be assessed and engaged in the peace and mediation processes.

7.2 Preliminary ceasefires and comprehensive peace agreements

There are usually two types of agreements that are negotiated during a national-level peace process: preliminary ceasefires and CPAs.

7.2.1 Preliminary ceasefires

In some cases, preliminary ceasefires may be agreed to prior to a final agreement. These aim to create a more conducive environment for talks to take place. DDR provisions are not included in such agreements.

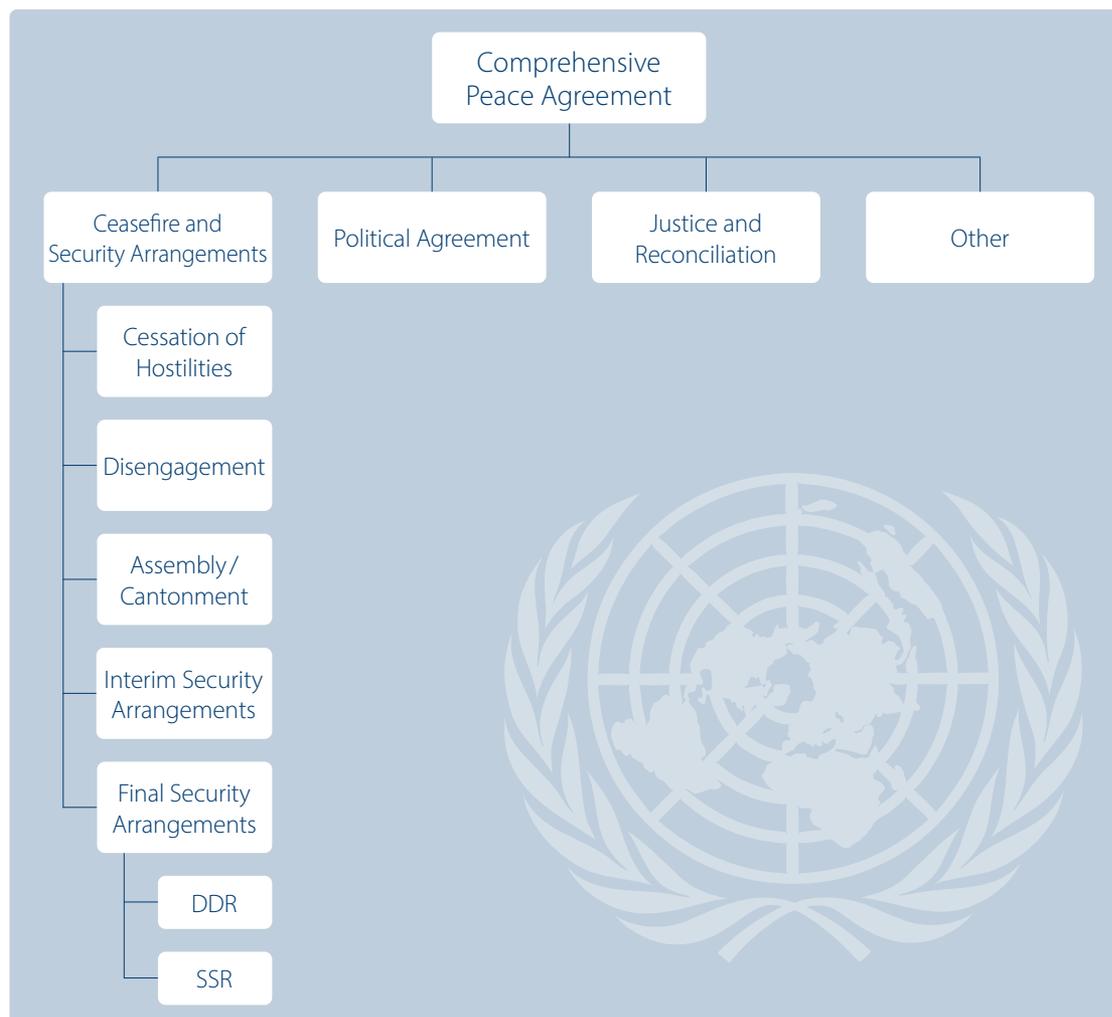
7.2.2 Comprehensive Peace Agreements

DDR programmes are often the result of a CPA that seeks to address political and security issues. Without such an agreement, warring parties are unlikely to agree to measures that reduce their ability to use military force to reach their goals.

As illustrated in Diagram 1 below, CPAs usually include several chapters or annexes addressing different substantive issues.

The first three activities under “Ceasefire and Security Arrangements” are typically part of the ceasefire process. The cantonment of forces, especially when cantonment sites are also used for DDR activities, is usually the nexus between the ceasefire and the “final security arrangements” that include DDR and SSR (see section 7.5).

DIAGRAM 1: SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND OTHER ISSUES IN A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT



Ceasefires usually require the parties to provide a declaration of forces for monitoring purposes, ideally disaggregated by sex and including information regarding the presence of WAAFG, CAAFG, abductees, etc. This declaration can provide important planning information for DDR practitioners and, in some cases, negotiated agreements may stipulate the declared number of people in each movement that are expected to participate in a DDR process. Likewise, the assembly or cantonment of forces may provide the opportunity to launch disarmament and demobilization activities in assembly areas, or, at a minimum, to provide information outreach and a preliminary registration of personnel for planning purposes. Outreach should always include messages about the eligibility of female DDR participants and encourage their registration.

Discussions on the disengagement and withdrawal of troops may provide information as to where the process is likely to take place as well as the number of persons involved and the types and quantities of weapons and ammunition present.

In addition to security arrangements, the role of armed groups in interim political institutions is usually laid out in the political chapters of a CPA. If political power-sharing

systems are set up straight after a conflict, these are the bodies whose membership will be negotiated during a peace agreement. Transitional governments must deal with critical issues and processes resulting from the conflict, including in many cases DDR. It is also these bodies that may be responsible for laying the foundations of longer-term political structures, often through activities such as the review of constitutions, the holding of national political dialogues and the organization of elections. Where there is also a security role for these actors, this may be established in either the political or security chapters of a CPA.

Political roles may include participation in the interim administration at all levels (central Government and regional and local authorities) as well as in other political bodies or movements such as being represented in national dialogues. Security areas of consideration might include the need to provide security for political actors, in many cases by establishing protection units for politicians, often drawn from the ranks of their combatants. It may also include the establishment of interim security systems that will incorporate elements from armed forces and groups (see section 7.5.1)

7.3 DDR support to mediation

As members of mediation support teams or mission staff in an advisory role to the Special Representative to the Secretary-General (SRSG) or the Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary-General (DSRSG), DDR practitioners can provide advice on how to engage with armed forces and groups on DDR issues and contribute to the attainment of agreements. In non-mission settings, the UN peace and development advisors (PDAs) deployed to the office of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) play a key role in advising the RC and the government on how to engage and address armed groups. DDR practitioners assigned to UN mediation support teams may also draft DDR provisions of ceasefires, local peace agreements and CPAs, and make proposals on the design and implementation of DDR processes.

In addition to the various parties to the conflict, the UN should also support the participation of civil society in peace negotiations, in particular women, youth and others traditionally excluded from peace talks. Women's participation (in mediation and negotiations) can expand the range of domestic constituencies engaged in a peace process, strengthening its legitimacy and credibility. Women's perspectives also bring a different understanding of the causes and consequences of conflict, generating more comprehensive and potentially targeted proposals for its resolution.

Mediators and DDR practitioners should recognize the sensitivities around language and be flexible and contextual with the terms that are used. The term 'reintegration' may be perceived as inappropriate, particularly if members of armed groups never left their communities. Terms such as 'rehabilitation' or 'reincorporation' may be considered instead. Similarly, the term 'disarmament' can include connotations of surrender or of having weapons taken away by a more powerful actor, and its use can prevent warring parties from moving forward with the negotiations (see also IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament). DDR practitioners and mediators can consider the use of more neutral terms, such as 'laying aside of weapons' or 'transitional weapons and ammunition management'. The use of transitional WAM activities and terminology may also set the ground for more realistic arms control provisions in a peace agreement while

guarantees around security, justice and integration into the security sector are lacking (see also IDDRS 4.11 on Transitional Weapons and Ammunition Management). Mediators and other actors supporting the mediation process should have strong DDR and WAM knowledge or have access to expertise that can guide them in designing appropriate and evidence-based DDR WAM provisions.

Within a CPA, the detail of large parts of the final security arrangements, including strategy and programme documents and budgets, is often left until later. However, CPAs should typically establish the principle that DDR will take place and outline the structures responsible for implementation.

If contextual analysis reveals that both local and national conflict dynamics are at play (see section 5.1.4) DDR practitioners can support a multilevel approach to mediation. This approach should not be reactive and ad hoc, but part of a well-articulated strategy explicitly connecting the local to the national.

Problems may arise if those engaged in negotiations are not well informed about DDR and commit to an unsuitable or unrealistic process. This usually occurs when DDR expertise is not available in negotiations or the organizations that might support a DDR process are not consulted by the mediators or facilitators of a peace process. It is therefore important to ensure that DDR experts are available to advise on peace agreements that include provisions for DDR.

7.3.1 Peace mediation and gender

Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

- a. The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;
- b. Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;
- c. Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.

7.4 DDR support to confidence-building measures

DDR processes often contend with a lack of trust between the signatories to peace agreements. Previous experience with DDR programmes indicates two common delay tactics: the inflation of numbers of fighters to increase a party's importance and weight in the peace negotiations, and the withholding of combatants and arms until there is greater trust in the peace process. Some peace agreements have linked progress in DDR to progress in the political track so as to overcome fears that, once disarmed, the movement will lose influence and its political claims may not be fully met.

Confidence-building measures (CBMs) are often used to reduce or eliminate the causes of mistrust and tensions during negotiations or to reinforce confidence where it already exists. Certain DDR activities and related tools can also be considered CBMs and could be instituted in support of peace negotiations. For example, CVR programmes can also be used as a means to de-escalate violence during a preliminary ceasefire and

to build confidence before the signature of a CPA and the launch of a DDR programme (see also IDDRS 2.30 on Community Violence Reduction). Furthermore, pre-DDR may be used to try to reduce tensions on the ground while negotiations are ongoing.

Pre-DDR and CVR can provide combatants with alternatives to waging war at a time when negotiating parties may be cut off or prohibited from accessing their usual funding sources (e.g., if a preliminary agreement forbids their participation in resource exploitation, taxation or other income-generating activities). However, in the absence of a CPA, prolonged CVR and pre-DDR can also become a support mechanism for armed groups rather than an incentive to finalize peace negotiations. Such processes should therefore be approached with caution.

7.5 DDR and transitional and final security arrangements

Most CPAs include provisions for transitional (or ‘interim’) and final security arrangements. Transitional security arrangements are typically put in place to support DDR programmes by establishing security structures, often jointly or with a third party such as a UN peace operation, that can provide security before the final post-conflict security structures are established. In situations where UN peace operations are unlikely to be established following the signature of a CPA, joint security mechanisms may be put in place as part of transitional and final security arrangements with or without different forms of international verification. Alternatively, a separate mechanism driven either by regional economic communities or bilateral players agreed to by the warring parties may be deployed. DDR programmes are usually part of the final security arrangements that establish, among other things, what will happen to the fighting forces post-conflict.

7.5.1 Transitional security

Transitional security arrangements vary in scope depending on the context, levels of trust and what might be acceptable to the parties. Options that might be considered include:

- Acceptable third-party actor(s) who are able to secure the process.
- Joint units, patrols or operations involving the parties to a conflict, often alongside a third-party presence (see also IDDRS 4.11 on Transitional Weapons and Ammunition Management).
- Local security actors such as community police who are acceptable to the communities and to the actors, as they are considered neutral and not a force brought in from outside.
- Deployment of national police. Depending on the situation, this may have to occur with prior consent for any operations within a zone or be done alongside a third-party actor.

Transitional security structures may require the parties to act as a security provider during a period of political transition. This may happen prior to or alongside DDR programmes. This transition phase is vital for building confidence at a time when warring parties may be losing their military capacity and their ability to defend themselves. This transitional period also allows for progress in parallel political, economic or social tracks. There is, however, often a push to proceed as quickly as possible to the

final security arrangements and a normalization of the security scene. Consequently, DDR may take place during the transition phase so that when this comes to an end the armed groups have been demobilized. This may mean that DDR proceeds in advance of other parts of the peace process, despite its success being tied to progress in these other areas.

7.5.2 Final security arrangements

DDR programmes are usually considered to be part of the CPA's provisions on final security arrangements. These seek to address the final status of signatories to the CPA through DDR, SSR, restructuring of security governance institutions and other related reforms.

7.5.3 Verification

Verification measures are used to ensure that the parties comply with an agreement. Verification is usually carried out by inclusive, neutral or joint bodies. The latter often include the parties and an impartial actor (such as the UN or local parties acceptable to all sides) that can help resolve disagreements. Verification mechanisms for disarmament may be separate from the bodies established to implement DDR (usually a DDR commission) and may also verify other parts of a peace process in both mission and non-mission settings.

8. Designing politically sensitive DDR processes

8.1 Recognizing the political dynamics of DDR

DDR should not be seen as a purely technical process, but one that requires active political support at all levels. In mission settings, this also means that DDR should not be viewed as the unique preserve of the DDR section. It should be given the attention and support it deserves by the senior mission leadership, who must be the political champions of such processes. In non-mission settings, DDR will fall under the responsibility of the UN RC system and the UNCT.

8.2 DDR-related tools

A peace agreement is a precondition for a DDR programme, but DDR programmes need not always follow peace agreements. Other DDR-related tools, such as CVR, may be more appropriate, particularly following a local-level peace agreement or even during active conflict (see IDDRS 2.30 on Community Violence Reduction).

DDR practitioners must assess the political consequences, if any, of supporting DDR processes in active conflict contexts. In particular, the intended outcomes of such interventions should be clear. For example, is the aim to contribute to local-level stabilization or to make the rewards of stability more tangible, perhaps through a CVR project or by supporting the reintegration of those who leave active armed groups? Alternatively, is the purpose to provide impetus to a national-level peace process? If the latter, a clear theory of change, outlining how local interventions are intended to scale up, is required.

8.3 DDR programmes

If designed properly, DDR programmes and pre-DDR can reduce parties' concerns about disbanding their fighting forces and losing political and military advantage. The following political sensitivities should be taken into account:

8.3.1 Political optics

The handover of weapons from one party to another (e.g., from an armed group to a Government) may be inappropriate, as it could be viewed as one side surrendering to the other (see also IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament). To address this issue, DDR practitioners can consider:

- The handover of weapons to a neutral third party.
- The design of disarmament sites, as well as who is present there. The design should seek to minimize negative perceptions linked to the handover of weapons. This may also mean that the sites are under the control of a neutral party.

Demobilizing selected elements (e.g., war wounded, veterans, child soldiers) from an armed force or group can be a strong signal of the movement's willingness to move forward with peace while allowing the bulk of their forces to remain intact until political goals or benchmarks have been met. This can be a controversial approach, as in some cases it can allow warring parties to get rid of members who are less combat capable, thus leaving them with smaller but more effective forces.

8.3.2 Parity in disarmament and demobilization

Disarmament provisions are not always applied evenly to all parties and, most often, armed forces are not disarmed. This can create an imbalance in the process, with one side being asked to hand over more weapons than the other. Even the symbolic disarmament or control (safe storage as a part of a supervised process) of a number of the armed forces' weapons can help to create a perception of parity in the process. This could involve the control of the same number of weapons from the armed forces as those handed in by armed groups.

Similarly, because it is often argued that armed forces are required to protect the nation and uphold the rule of law, DDR processes may demobilize only the armed opposition. This can create security concerns for the disarmed and demobilized groups whose opponents retain the ability to use force, and perceptions of inequality in the way that armed forces and groups are treated, with one side retaining jobs and salaries while the other is demobilized. In order to create a more equitable process, mediators may allow for the cantonment or barracking of a number of Government troops equivalent to the number of fighters from armed groups that are cantoned, disarmed and demobilized. They may also push for the demobilization of some members of the armed forces so as to make room for the integration of members of opposition armed groups into the national army.

8.3.3 Linkages to other aspects of the peace process

Opposition armed groups may be reluctant to demobilize their troops and dismantle their command structures before receiving tangible indications that the political aspects of an agreement will be implemented. This can take time, and there may be a need to consider measures to keep troops under command and control, fed and paid in the interim. They could include:

- Extended cantonment (this should not be open ended, and a reasonable end date should be set, even if it needs to be renegotiated later);
- Linking demobilization to the successful completion of benchmarks in the political arena and in the transformation of armed groups into political parties;
- Pre-DDR activities;
- Providing other opportunities such as work brigades that keep the command and control of the groups but reorientate them towards more constructive activities.

Such processes must be measured against the ability of the organization to control its troops and may be controversial as they retain command and control structures that can facilitate remobilization.

Mid-level and senior commander's political aspirations should be considered when developing demobilization options. Support for political actors is a sensitive issue and can have important implications for the perceived neutrality of the UN, so decisions on this should be taken at the highest level. If agreed to, support in this field may require linking up with other organizations that can assist. Similarly, reintegration into civilian life could be broadened to include a political component for DDR programme participants. This could include civic education and efforts to build political platforms, including political parties. While these activities lie outside of the scope of DDR, DDR practitioners could develop partnerships with actors that are already engaged in this field. The latter could develop projects to assist armed group members who enter into politics in preparing for their new roles.

Finally, when reintegration support is offered to former combatants, persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups, and community members, there may be politically motivated attempts to influence whether these individuals opt to receive reintegration support or take up other, alternative options. Warring parties may push their members to choose an option that supports their former armed force or group as opposed to the individual's best chances at reintegration. They may push cadres to run for political office, encourage integration into the security services so as to build a power base within these forces, or opt for cash reintegration assistance, some of which is used to support political activities. The notion of individual choice should therefore be encouraged so as to counter attempts to co-opt reintegration to political ends.

8.3.4 Elections and the transformation of armed groups

Along with the signature of a peace agreement, elections are often seen as a symbol marking the end of the transition from war to peace. If they are to be truly representative and offer an alternative way of contesting power, politics must be demilitarized ("take the gun out of politics" or go "from bullet to ballot") and transform armed groups into viable political parties that compete in the political arena. It is also through political parties that citizens, including former combatants, can involve themselves in politics and policymaking, as parties provide them with a structure for political participation and a channel for making their voices heard. Not all armed groups can become viable political parties. In this case, alternatives can be sought, including the establishment of a civil society organization aimed at advancing the cause of the group. However, if the transformation of armed groups into political parties is part of the conflict resolution process, reflected in a peace agreement, then the UN should provide support towards this end.

DDR may affect the holding of or influence the outcome of elections in several ways:

- Armed forces and groups that wield power through weapons and the threat of violence can influence the way people vote, affecting the free and fair nature of the elections.
- Hybrid political ‘parties’ that are armed and able to organize violence retain the ability to challenge electoral results through force.
- Armed groups may not have had the time nor space to transform into political actors. They may feel cheated if they are not able to participate fully in the process and revert to violence, as this is their usual way of challenging institutions or articulating grievances.
- Women in armed groups may be excluded or marginalized as leadership roles and places in the political ranks are carved out.

There is often a push for DDR to happen before elections are held. This may be a part of the sequencing of a peace process (signature of an agreement – DDR programme – elections), and in some cases completing DDR may be a pre-condition for holding polls. Delays in DDR may affect the timing of elections, or elections that are planned too early can result in a rushed DDR process, all of which may compromise the credibility of the broader peace process. Conversely, postponing elections until DDR is completed can be difficult, especially given the long timeframes for DDR, and when there are large caseloads of combatants still to be demobilized or non-signatory movements are still active and can become spoilers. For these reasons DDR practitioners should consider the sequencing of DDR and elections and acknowledge that the interplay between them will have knock-on effects.

Annex A: Abbreviations

CAAFG	children associated with armed forces and groups
CBM	confidence-building measures
CDA	conflict and development analysis
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CVR	community violence reduction
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary-General
NGO	non-governmental organization
PDA	peace and development advisors
SRSG	Special Representative to the Secretary-General
SSR	security sector reform
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UN RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WAAF	women associated with armed forces and groups
WAM	weapons and ammunition management

Annex B: Typology of armed groups

TYPE	AIMS / REASONS FOR FIGHTING	EFFECT
POLITICAL	To impose or protect a political system or party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More likely to have a strong political ideology. ■ Willing to participate in a political system. ■ More likely to have links to an existing political platform.
ECONOMIC	A redistribution or accumulation of wealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Redistribution of wealth likely to come with a strong ideological base and beliefs that could be pushed politically. ■ Accumulation of wealth – possibly self-serving and predatory. ■ Likely to be less concerned about ideology/how the wealth is obtained. ■ Could be convinced to participate politically (buy-off?) but probably won't have much of a real political platform or be able to attract a political base.
SOCIAL	To bring about changes in social status, roles or balances of power (including independence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Could accept to challenge the social order politically if they feel the political system will allow them to do this in a fair manner.
SECURITY DRIVEN	To protect a community or group from a real or perceived threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Political goals once the security threat has subsided may be limited or non-existent. ■ Ability to widen its political appeal is likely to be limited
CULTURAL/ SPIRITUAL	To protect or impose values, ideas or principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Depending on the ideas, values or principles may not be willing to participate in an existing political system but may seek to impose its own governance systems.
MATERIAL	To protect material resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Likely to be single issue. ■ Likely to have local appeal but little platform/support beyond that.
OPPORTUNISTIC	To leverage a situation to achieve any of the above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unlikely to have a political platform. ■ Self-serving.

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