

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) A New Paradigm in the Resolution of the Ongoing Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon: Myth or Reality

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Abstract: Postcolonial conflict and wars in African countries are still on the rise, despite numerous efforts to put an end to them. Since then, some African states have made advances in post conflict peace building and intergroup reconciliation. The attacks by terrorists in the Far North Region for over five years now, and the violence propagated by armed separatist groups in the North West and South West Regions since 2016 have left a crushing impact on the socio economic and political life of Cameroon. The crisis that started as a corporatist claim in the predominantly two English-speaking regions of the country and to which no appropriate solutions were provided, was hijacked by the secessionist movement. It was from this backdrop that the President of the Republic of Cameroon signed a Decree in November 2018 to establish the National DDR committee as an attempt to solve the ongoing Anglophone crisis. This paper examines the relevance of DDR in reforming the security and political sector in the Anglophone Regions. This paper utilizes mixed-methods to ascertain this objective. Amongst the several results we found out that the DDR in these Regions can significantly contribute to peace building despite the numerous challenges it faces.

Keywords: Anglophone crisis, DDR, civil war, peace-building, separatist.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cameroon in the past decade has witnessed intensive violence between government forces and *Boko Haram* insurgency in the Northern region, and lately in the Anglophone regions' (Northwest and Southwest) pro-independence armed struggle. The crisis began in October 2016 with protests by teachers and lawyers, which escalated into an armed insurrection at the end of 2017 and have since degenerated into a civil war. The conflict has killed at least 1,850 people since September 2017 and has now spread to the West and Littoral regions. It has had a substantial social and humanitarian impact in the Anglophone regions: most schools have been closed for the last almost four years, more than 170 villages have been destroyed, 530,000 people have been internally displaced, and 35,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. The conflict has also devastated the

local economy, which accounts for about one fifth of the country's GDP.¹

Peace, stability and safeguard are important elements of security of not only states but also that of the citizenry and their belongings. This brings us to the need to have transformational elements in the society for there to be sustainable development. In order words, transformational security settings is an important element of sustainable development, and this is only possible when there are synergies between long and short term coordinated efforts. It is from this background that on the 30th of November 2018, President Paul Biya signed a degree creating the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Committee, (NDDRC). Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) most times operates contemporaneously with transitional justice processes in conflict affected societies. It is a complex process with political, military, security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions.

From this backdrop and in line with conventional international standards and the peculiar case of Cameroon, a technical analysis of the DDR beyond doubt, evinces another futile attempt to address this crisis. The main objective of this article is to examine how effective the DDR is in these Regions. It offers a critical evaluation of the metrics and methods currently used, highlight persistent challenges to impact assessment in volatile environments, and offers recommendations for more rigorous impact assessment of DDR programmes. The decree brings to light the following fundamental shortcomings which makes it only a window dressing and yet another misplaced priority.

1. Theoretical Framework

In an attempt to generate a theory grounded on the phenomenon under investigation, it appears important to discuss belligerent perspectives as to the causes of the hostile

¹ International Crisis Group (2019), "Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to Get to Talks?", Africa Report N°272/2, Brussels-Belgium, (Translation from French) May 2019, p.2.

inter-societal interactions. The current antagonism is understood as a kind of politically-driven conflict with claims on equal treatments. As such it is important to have a look at some theories and analysis which are concerned with the present peace attempts in the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. By so doing, our analysis will be based on the works of some economists, historians and social anthropologists who are involved in the theorizing of politically and ethnically-driven conflicts. The extent to which these theories are applicable to our case study will be seen. This study is reflected in **four** basic theories, namely the conflict, the disarmament, the demobilization and the reinsertion/reintegration theories.

1.1 Conflict Theory

William Zartman, a conflict specialist, perceives conflicts as indispensable in all human societies and argues that conflicts help to measure cost and commitment, and equally guide choices. There exist, therefore, opposing forces in the life of individuals, groups, social structures and societies in general. It is from these forces and constant competition between individuals and groups that the conflict theory takes its premise. This theory argues that in all human societies, all political, social and economic relations are based on mutual interest, understanding and trust. Karl Max saw economic factors and competition as the root cause of all conflicts hampering human societies. The idea he put forward was that societies can only function well if mutual understanding and trust can be identified. In such a situation, disagreements, divergences in thought, ideas and interest or better still, situations of friction in approaches, rationality in choices and decision would be avoided. He claimed that it is the lack of common concord on a single or multi-dimensional stream of thought, that conflicts are so rampant.² Hence, it appears convincing to assert that once there is a drop in mutual interest, understanding and trust among groups of individuals, conflict takes precedence. The main principle underlying the conflict theory is the conviction that all members of human society do not have the same values, interests and expectations. There is much variance when other inputs/elements including social class, privileges, position or wealth are taken into account. Every society, be it small or big, as noted in the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, has its own type of conflicts and a class of people for its interpretations.

Ibn Khaldun heralded his own conflict theory based on the fact that in the Arab world, the struggle between the nomads and the tillers represented the fundamental components in the evolution of the Arab civilization. It later inspired Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince* who saw the development of the state and its key institutions as permanent pillars of conflicts. Similar reflections on conflict theories were made by Charles Darwin in 1882 when he placed human behaviour at the level

of plant species. Darwin believed, like the economist Thomas Malthus, that resources were grossly inadequate to meet the needs of the growing population and asserted that, because of constant competition, life and survival was a matter of the strong (fittest).³ Implicitly, Malthus and Darwin were arguing that competition and conflict among all living things (animate and inanimate) were very common because of scarcity of food, space and other valuable resources.⁴ In essence, these great scientists were simply corroborating Karl Marx's idea.

The conflict theory, therefore, exposes us to other sub theories such as disarmament, demobilisation and reinsertion/reintegration that are all relevant in this paper.

1.2 Disarmament Theory

According to Koubi,⁵ disarmament is the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons. To him, disarmament of rival nations can only take place when all countries involved are made better off and a feasibility criterion is also satisfied. Disarmament is more probable when nations face a similar trade off in the acquisition of weapons, when developments in military capabilities can be speedily and accurately verified, and when the existing weapon systems are easily reproducible. A successful disarmament also requires that the speed of the disposition of arms be neither too fast nor too slow. General and complete disarmament was defined by the United Nations General Assembly⁶ as the destruction of all weapons of mass destruction (WMD), coupled with the balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments. Such disarmament is based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all states to protect their security.

Freedman⁷, a disarmament theorist, holds that disarmament can occur only as a result of a prior reduction in tension. Disarmament can occur only in the wake of a political agreement. He posits that disarmament requires a system based on states taking responsibility for their own security with an alternative system based on collective security. The key principal would be that any act of aggression, anywhere, by anyone, against anyone, will be resisted by all the members of the system collectively; faced with this threat of overwhelming power, no state will resort to aggression. A practical step towards an effective disarmament taking all the required steps would address the issue of sustainable peace in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. The government of Cameroon organized a "Grand National

³ C. Darwin (1872), *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, London, John Murray, pp.8-10.

⁴ Robert H. Frank (2011), *The Darwin Economy: Liberty, Competition, and Common Good*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, p.6.

⁵ Vally Koubi (1994) "Disarmament: A theoretical analysis", in *International Interactions*, 19:4, 263-281.

⁶ United Nations General Assembly, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959, Vol.1, 1945-1956, Department of State Publication, 7008, 1960.

⁷ Lawrence Freedman (1987), *Why Is Arms Control So Boring?*, London: Council for Arms Control, Faraday Discussion Paper No. 9.

² As cited by M. Darwin Wagner (1958), *Critique of a Heritage*, Garden City, N.Y. Doubleday, p.9.

Dialogue” which was an excellent step towards peace building, but its major shortcoming was that it failed to involve all the warring parties in the armed conflict.

1.3 Demobilization Theory

According to United Nations,⁸ Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion. This assistance is offered to ex-combatants during demobilization, but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration.

According to Mc Gaughey⁹, demobilization is the process of standing down a nation’s armed forces from combat-ready status. This may be as a result of victory in war, or because a crisis has been peacefully resolved and military force is no longer necessary. The opposite of demobilization is mobilization. He further said demobilization of a defeated enemy is called demilitarization and that the end of war is not an event, but a process.

In the case under study, demobilization would help ex-combatants prepare themselves for reintegration to their societies and to be fully accepted by their communities. The demobilization process is not yet well effective because the Anglophone crisis is still on the resolution process. Besides this, the number of combatants in the bushes is in fact, more superior to the number of already existing ex-combatants in the camps. This clearly shows that the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programme still faces serious challenges in its initial stage.

1.4 Reinsertion/Reintegration Theory

Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families, and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools.¹⁰ While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year. In this case, Reintegration refers to a process by

which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open timeframe, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.¹¹

However the alleged root causes as unemployment, marginalization, corruption and the general lack of opportunities require large and expensive investments carried out over long periods of time. Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration by its nature can only bring about a few quick wins. It is generally believed that education or vocational skills training of ex-combatants is a first step towards economic reintegration. For some reintegration critical theorists, vocational training persists because it is what donors and implementing actors know and are willing to fund, and it, therefore, involves little risk. Some ex-combatants at the camps are already undergoing training that will help them be reintegrated in to the society in the nearest future when armed conflict comes to an end. But the question is how sustainable is the training? Will this training fetch them a lot of money at the end of the programme? Will they have ready markets for the consumption of the goods they produce at the centres? What guarantee will keep an ex-combatant at the camp to learn a programme which he is not sure to fetch him lots of money at the end of the month as compared to the ransoms of millions he demands after kidnapping people?

Besides these theories advanced in this paper, one will equally understand that this study is an embodiment of a broad spectrum of sociological theories with each contributing to the overall understanding of the specific ideas developed in this paper.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CREATION OF THE DDR

The Anglophone crisis in the North and South West Regions of Cameroon provoked the creation of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program in November 2018. The combat between the formal and the non-formal army caused thousands of deaths in the two Anglophone Regions where civilians have been largely affected. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) committee was created during the climax of armed conflict in the English speaking Regions of Cameroon. However, this was done without inclusive dialogue, peace accords and ceasefire between the warring parties. Since the creation of this committee, there has been continuous violence that has negatively affected the educational system, spurred a poor judicial system, increased suffering amongst the people, led to homelessness, thousands of deaths, kidnappings, acute poverty, diseases, social expulsion, loss of human values/dignity, political imbalance, the devastation of

⁸ United Nations (2005), “Note by the Secretary-General on Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of UN Peacekeeping Operations”, A/C.5/59/31, May 24.

⁹ Enzo Nussio & Kimberly Howe (2016), “When Protection Collapses: Post-Demobilization Trajectories of Violence”, in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 28:5, 848-867.

¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly (2006), *Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration*, Report of the Secretary-General, Sixtieth session, Press Release SC/6830.

¹¹ Ibid.

important infrastructure and above all, a fall in the economic growth rate/ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Cameroon. The English speaking Regions so far have been repulsive to government policy of creating the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration committee that has not been to their favour.¹²

Government’s position in the ongoing war in these Regions is that they are at war against terrorists, armed separatists and secessionists, and that is why they have created the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program. Anglophone fighters are referred to as separatists because they want to separate the Republic of Cameroon. This is because the motive underlying the fight is restoration of the statehood of Southern Cameroon. The crisis for the restoration of the statehood of the British Southern Cameroon is not a new phenomenon. It only escalated and became violent in 2016 when the lawyers and teachers started peaceful movements, walks and matches that were reprimanded by the forces of law and order. That was the beginning of the armed conflict. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) was created by the president of the republic in the context of solving the problem of separatist fighters.¹³

Looking at figures, at least 235 soldiers and police officers, 650 civilians and close to 1,000 separatists has lost their lives. From a government’s perspective, these numbers are different; estimates are that there are 1,600 dead (400 civilians, 160 soldiers and police officers and 1,000 separatists). Meanwhile, Anglophone federalists estimate 3,000-5,000 dead whereas separatists estimate 5,000-10,000 dead. Also, more than 170 villages have been destroyed, 530,000 people have been internally displaced and 35,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. By comparison, the death toll in the conflict with *Boko Haram* in Cameroon is 3,100 over five years (2014-April 2019) including 1,900 civilians, 215 soldiers and police officers, and 1,000 combatants. Besides that, about 100 schools have been burned down over the last two years, most of them by the separatists.¹⁴ It is against this backdrop of losses of thousands of human lives and heightened tensions that DDR was created as a means to rapidly solve the ongoing Anglophone crisis. The subsequent illustrations (Map, Table and Figure) give a vivid view about the crisis.

Map 1: Map of Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis



Source: International Crisis Group (2019), p.30.

Table 1: Armed Separatists Presence in the Anglophone Regions

Group	Leader	Stronghold	Numbers (estimate)
Manyu Tigers	Martin Ashu	Manyu Division (Southwest)	500
Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SOCADEF)	Ebenezer Akwanga	Meme Division	400
Ambazonia Defense Forces	Benedict Kuah	Both regions	200-500
Red Dragons	Olivier Lekene Fongunueh (Field Marshall)	Lebalem Division (Southwest)	200
Seven Kata		Batibo town and Momo Division (Northwest)	200
The Sword of Ambazonia (TSOA)		Meme Division	200
Ambaland Quifor	Silas Zama	Mezam Division (Northwest)	200
Southern Cameroons Restoration Forces	“Général” RK	Boyo division (Northwest)	100
Warriors of Nso	Warriors of Nso	Bui division (Northwest)	100

Source: Author’s collection aided by International Crisis Group (2019).

Note: It is difficult to estimate the numbers in these armed groups because they tend to claim higher numbers than they

¹² B. Berinyuy Mangong (2020), “disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in peace building: an investigation of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon with focus on the North West Region”, (Draft work of) Master Dissertation in Peace and Conflict Management with International Relations, Pan African Institute For Development, Buea, p.16.

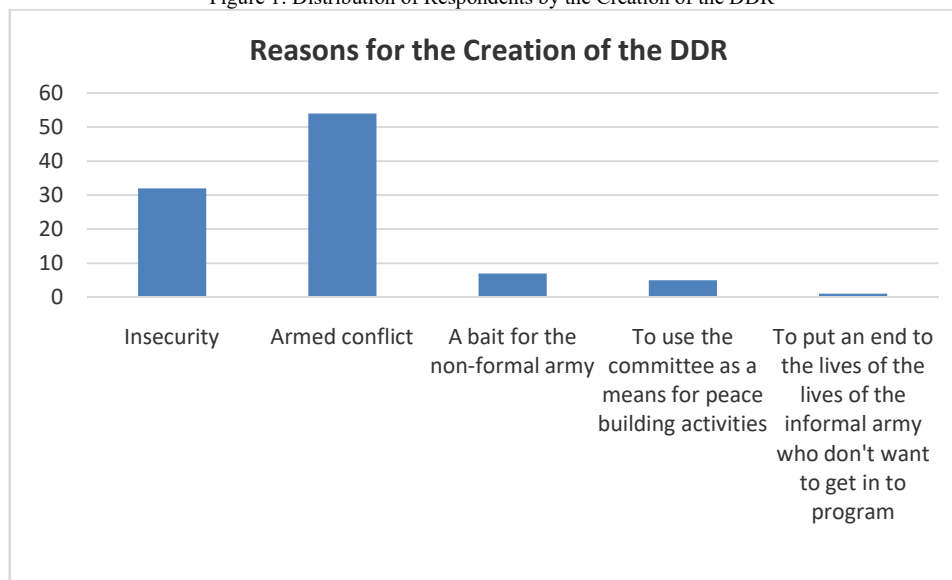
¹³ <https://cameroon-report.com/secure/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration-committee-set-up/> posted 4 December 2018, retrieved April 2020.

¹⁴ International Crisis Group (2019), p.3.

really have. For example, SOCADEF's leader said that his group had more than 3,500 active combatants, but he appears to have not more than 500. In this case, only listed groups with at least 200 members, an official name and an identifiable leader were mentioned in this table. About 20 smaller semi-criminal, semi-separatist groups also exist and

have a few dozen members. Finally, the attacks in the West Region (Noun, Bamboutos and Menoua divisions) seem to be the work of a few small groups based in Ngoketunjia Division (Babessi, Bambaland, Bamessing and Bamali) in the Northwest region.

Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by the Creation of the DDR



Source: B. B. Mangong (2020), p.88.

Figure 1 above shows the reasons for the creation of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. The figure shows that Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration were created for armed conflict, followed by insecurity. These two are found to be the main aims of the creation of the DDR. Still as illustrated on the figure above, the third reason why the DDR program was created is for the fact that it is used as bait for the non-formal army so that it will lure them to easily drop their arms so as to get reintegrated into the society.

From this angle, one can rightly say that the DDR was created for the following objectives:

- To contribute to security and stability by facilitating reintegration and providing the enabling environment for rehabilitation and recovery to begin;
- To restore trust through confidence-building among conflicting factions and with the general population;
- To help prevent or mitigate future violent conflict;
- To contribute to national reconciliation; and
- To free up human and financial resources, and social capital, for reconstruction and development.

III. STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION OF DDR IN CAMEROON

The DDR of ex-combatants is a complex process with political, military, security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions. It aims at addressing the post-conflict security challenges that arise from ex-combatants being left without

livelihoods or support networks, other than their former comrades, during the critical transition period from conflict to peace and development. DDR seeks to support the ex-combatants' economic and social reintegration, so they can become stakeholders in peace. While much of a DDR programme is focused on ex-combatants, the main beneficiaries of the programme should ultimately be the wider community.

The national DDR committee (CNDDR) is headed by former governor Fai Yengo Francis. It operates on the same basis as UN's peacekeeping missions. Structurally, operations carried out by the committee will focus on areas where the concerned militants come from, theoretically at least. Municipalities concerned include Bamenda and Buea, the respective head districts of the English-speaking regions of the North West and South West, and Mora in the Far North.¹⁵ Strategically, the purpose of the DDR in English-speaking regions is to gather militants and armed secessionists and help them be reinserted into civilian life. *Plate 1* gives an eye view of the DDR headquarters in Yaounde.

¹⁵ <https://cameroon-report.com/secureite/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration-committee-set-up/> posted 4 December 2018, retrieved April 2020.

Plate 1: DDR Head Office Yaounde



Source: Author's Collections, 20 April 2020.

Under the authority of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, and headed by a coordinator appointed by a presidential decree, the committee has regional centers in Bamenda, Buea, and Mora in which disarmament, demobilization and preparation for reintegration are effectively carried out.

According to Decree 2018/719 of November 30th, 2018, creating the committee, the role of the DDR is to collaborate with relevant government services, NGOs and international partners, particularly the United Nations to collect, list and store weapons and munitions voluntarily handed over by ex-fighters, taking appropriate measures to destroy the weapons, munitions and explosives, setting up and managing cantonment sites for ex-fighters, providing multifaceted assistance to these ex-fighters to prepare them for a return to civil life, taking necessary steps to de-radicalize ex-fighters, facilitate their reintegration into the society by training them in income-generating activities.¹⁶ Table 2 below illustrates the three main components of DDR.

¹⁶ Decree 2018/719 of November 30th, 2018

Table 2: The Three Components of DDR

Phase	Support
Disarmament	Assembly of soldiers, documentation, and collection and sometimes destruction of weapons
Demobilisation	Cantonment of soldiers Supplying basic needs, i.e. food, medication, housing, clothing, basic education and counselling, Census, Discharge documentation, Sometimes first part of reinsertion package, Transport to home town
Reinsertion/ Reintegration	Job generation and placement, Education and training, Provision of tool kits, clothing, food and housing materials, Distribution of farmland, Credit schemes Psychological counselling, Direct financial assistance, i.e. cash payments and loans.

Source: Authors collection drawn from, Lilli Banholzer (2014), "When Do Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programmes Succeed?", Discussion Paper, German Development Institute, Bonn, 8/2014, p.15.

In the North West Region, the Prime Ministerial decree appointed the educator Gabsa Sixtus, former Principal of Government High School Ndog to coordinate the DDR Centre in Bamenda. He recognized that it will be a daunting task, but he remained optimistic that with the support of all the population, peace will return to the North West Region. He explained that the Centre is a hand of fellowship and forgiveness offered to those who have taken up arms and he is ready to receive them, offer them training so they can restart a sustainable life.¹⁷

In the Regional Centre of Buea, Fonju Njukang Bernard was given the task to pilot the affairs of the South West Regional DDR Centre. He acknowledged that the task requires working across the board with all stakeholders: population, Forces of law and Order, administrative and traditional authorities, media as well as civil society organizations. This will call for dialogue, good will, readiness and availability, tolerance and reconciliation. His knowledge in International Relations and Conflict Resolutions is an added value to the work that lies ahead.¹⁸

To end up, it should also be noted that in Mora, the civil administrator Oumar Bachir have the duty to implement the decision of the Head of State in the Far North Region, a region he masters so well since it is his native region and he has saved there in many capacities. He can better then evaluate the scope, magnitude and the dimension of the task awaiting him.

IV. A BALANCE SHEET AND THE CENTERS

Armed groups invaded all the thirteen administrative Divisions (seven in North West) and (six in South West). Above all, the situation continues to loom dark with imposed week-long lock-downs damaging socio-economic activities in the Regions and taking the lives of young Cameroonians. Teachers and students are being hunted down to enforce

¹⁷ Cynthia Efopa (2018), "Regional Heads of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Committee appointed", Published by Cameroon-report, 11 December 2018.

¹⁸ Ibid.

ghost-school threats. Consequences are extensive with hundreds of thousands fleeing their homes, villages razed and life becoming unbearable.

However, as attempts to support the transition from war to peace, DDR interventions have recorded some impressive achievements in terms of demobilization and disarmament. During the DDR first year evaluation 30 November 2019, the National Coordinator Fai Yengo Francis revealed that at least 120 armed separatist fighters in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon had laid down their arms. It is remarkable that all these early achievements are thanks to the tireless efforts of security forces, administrative authorities, and the collaboration of the population and the holding of the Major National Dialogue. Since the National Dialogue (30 September - 4 October 2019), the number has increased in Buea from 50 to 70 and in Bamenda from 50 to 60.¹⁹ Equally, the various Committees said the separatist fighters are gradually being reinserted at the Bamenda and Buea regional disarmament centres. During the National Dialogue, a good number of contingents came from the Bamenda and Buea centres. Some were given the responsibility to sing the Cameroon national anthem in the English language.

Besides, it was regrettable that one of the ex-separatist leader who came out and apologized in Wum during the installation of the Senior Divisional Officer for Menchum was killed the next day. This ex-combatant was killed because he did not follow the Governor's entourage immediately to Bamenda where he would have integrated the local DDR centre, but promised to spend the night in Wum and travel to Bamenda the next day.²⁰ The reason behind his refusal to move to Bamenda immediately was that he feared he would not be allowed to go back home and collect some of his possessions. The next morning, he was found dead in his house.

It should be made known that the admission process of ex-combatants in these centres is done in two ways.

The first type concerns ex-combatants who come straight to the centre on their own. Then, the security forces based in the centre carry out background checks to find out who these people are, and whether they are real ex-fighters. This is because in some cases, the centres had discovered that some of the people who showed up as ex-combatants were not real ex-fighters. The second type involves ex-combatants brought in by the security forces. When they come, they may stay for one or two days with the forces of law and order who carry out the same background checks on them, and if they satisfy the requirements for admission in the DDR centre, they are enrolled. They are good for the centres because the centres

want to take people that matter.²¹ To them this control mechanism is put in place because of the unknown.

4.1 DDR in the Bamenda Centre

To date, the Bamenda based Centre for DDR now enrolls about 52 ex-combatants (men and women) and offers varied gainful opportunities for fighters who drop their guns and leave the bushes. These young people, whose ages vary between 14 and 25, fought in the ranks of the Amba (separatists), the name given to the English-speaking armed separatists. The board of the DDR is composed of 17 ministries.²² This means that it provides social, health, education, vocational training, etc. which is followed by the establishment of each individual in his/her choice of vocation.

It is evident that the government created this committee to assist hundreds of former fighters who wish to drop their guns and get pardoned. The pardon is called AMNESTY which means the former separatists will not be in trouble for any crimes they committed while fighting with the separatists. As a direct measure, any separatist that wants to drop his guns should call 115. The number is free to call. In the same direction, the DDR has put in place a mechanism for the establishment of ID cards to those who don't have.²³ This is however, to ease identifications. *Plate 2* illustrates the Centre.

Plate 2: The DDR Centre Bamenda & the Inauguration by the P.M



Source: Authors' collections with field collaborator, February 2020.

¹⁹ Frédéric Takang (2020), "In Cameroon, dozens of fighters lay down their arms", in <https://www.bbc.com/afrique/region-48288334>, Bamenda, BBC Afrique, May 15, 2019, retrieved 14 April 2020.

²⁰ <https://actucameroun.com/2019/12/02/comite-national-de-desarmement-252-ex-combattants-deja-recenses/>, retrieved, 12 April 2020.

²¹ <https://actucameroun.com/2019/12/02/>.

²² Interview with, Gabsa Sixtus, 58+, DDR Coordinator for Bamenda Centre, 9 April 2020.

²³ KumKum Massa (2019), "Amnesty/Amnistie Cameroon offers pardons and amnesty to all Amba boys who drop their guns", available in, <https://kontripipo.com/amnesty/>, retrieved 19 April 2020.

The first recruits of the Centre are traced to December 27, 2018 when two ex-combatants were received from Oku in Bui Division. Ten months later, the Centre now enrolls 52 ex-combatants receiving professional skills in the process of moulding them into new persons with a new frame of mind. The Centre offers opportunities mainly in agricultural disciplines for now, especially in poultry rearing, pig rearing and gardening. Shoe mending and cosmetology are envisaged in the nearest days. Other training opportunities are in the production of rubbing oil, perfumes, and detergents just to name a few. Tailoring and hairdressing trades were equally introduced early this year with the staff strength of about 12 agricultural technicians and support staff on duty.²⁴ Each person is relocated to his/her choice of vocation or education.

Besides these professional trainings, there are many forms of recreational activities available in the centre. These include board games such as Ludo, playing cards, checkers, draughts board games, football, handball and volleyball. All these recreational facilities gain value in giving a new life shape to ex-separatists. At this moment, 20 or so ex-separatists are taking part in an internship program in the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications at Western Regional Headquarters in Bafoussam. Their selection was principally based on their advanced state of moral values.²⁵ It should also be understood that the town of relocation is chosen by the individual.

4.2 DDR in the Buea Centre

In Buea, currently more than 90 ex-combatants known as returnees have joined the DDR Centre. The Regional Centre of DDR in Buea, which is headed by Bernard Fonju, functions in the premises of the Borstal Institute of Buea, which is a State institution that has been carrying out similar reintegration duties on behalf of the Government under the Ministry of Social Affairs.²⁶ See the DDR Buea in *Plate 3*.

Plate 3: DDR centre Buea & the Launching day By the PMs Representative



Source: Authors' collections with field collaborator, April 2020.

The very first two (2) returnee-fighters from Ndian Division laid down their arms and integrated the Centre on 22 December 2018. Since then, their numbers have increased and seven more ex-fighters joined the Centre on 17 September 2019 following the Head of State's address to the nation instituting a Major National Dialogue. The Buea centre can accommodate about 120 interns under very decent conditions. However, the figure can rise to 160.²⁷ But in extreme necessity, the centre can entertain some 200 persons.

The daily activities in this Centre first start with personal hygiene, a bathe, normal preparation to start the day. But officially, activities of the day begin with an assembly, hoisting of the flag, singing of the national anthem, breakfast and classes which have to do with real education, civic education, and moral rearmament. Instructors are professionals from the Ministry of Social Affairs. By 11 a.m, the theoretical classes end and two hours are consecrated for workshop time.²⁸ The workshop time is meant for practical lessons either in driving, farming, poultry and pig rearing and otherwise.

From our sources, the Buea centre is not training civil servants but training people to acquire skills that can empower them. According to the Director of that centre, activities at the Centre are meant for rehabilitation and self-development. He says when the interns do agriculture, it is not training people to go to the Ministry of Agriculture and seek employment. Training in the Centre is directed to the acquisition of skills that can enable the learners to establish a farm and carry out their personal gainful activities in society. They do driving because it is a domain of high demand. One can work as a taxi driver. They can equally work in travel agencies. One can be employed by a private company, even by the administration.²⁹

In this Centre, relatives and friends come to visit interns, one of the reasons being that when they go back to their communities, they can testify that the returnees are alive,

²⁴ Choves Loh (2019), "Bamenda DDR Center - Varied Opportunities for Ex-Combatants" available in, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201909240164.html>, 23 September 2019, retrieved 15 April 2020.

²⁵ Interview with, Takor K. Nixon.

²⁶ <https://actu.cameroun.com/2019/12/02/comite-national-de-desarmement-252-ex-combattants-deja-recenses/>, retrieved, 12 April 2020.

²⁷ Journal du Cameroun (2020), "Program to reintegrate ex Ambazonia fighters launched in Buea", Published on 2 January 2020.

²⁸ Journal du Cameroun (2020).

²⁹ Interview with, Bernard Fonju Njukang, 50+, Director DDR Buea Centre, 20 April 2020.

taken care of and not ill-treated. When ex-fighters join the Centre, they fill out personal information sheets where they provide the names of their close friends and relatives who can visit them. A personal information sheet available at the level of the security services is regularly updated so that people don't come in to hurt the interns. The collected data enables the verification of all visitors at the Centre. The contacts of relatives and close friends with ex-combatants enable people to confirm that the government has not taken these ex-fighters to prison, that they have not disappeared, and they are well taken care of. That testimony is enough assurance for the other ex-fighters still in the bushes that if they decide to lay down their weapons, nothing will happen to them.³⁰

The major challenge in the Buea Centre is the inadequate medical follow-up for the ex-separatists. It is also a challenge in terms of being able to maintain discipline, to bring them together to understand and focus on the same objectives.³¹ They do not have the same level of education but they have to undergo training. The next section handles these challenges exclusively.

V. CHALLENGES FACED BY THE DDR IN THE ANGLOPHONE REGIONS

The DDR of ex-combatants is a complex process, with political, military, security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions. It aims at addressing the post-conflict security challenges that arise from ex-combatants being left without livelihoods or support networks, other than their former comrades, during the critical transition period from conflict to peace and development. DDR seeks to support the ex-combatants' economic and social reintegration, so they can become stakeholders in peace. While much of a DDR programme is focused on ex-combatants, the main beneficiaries of the programme should ultimately be the wider community. It is from this dropdown that this section attempts to discuss some of its difficulties faced by the DDR in the above regions.

One of the challenges faced by the DDR in the area under study is that the ex-combatants, especially the young, may have become a 'lost generation', as they have been deprived of education, employment and training during the conflict period. They suffer from war trauma, have become addicted to alcohol and drugs, and depend on weapons and violence as the only means to make their way in the area. When they lose their military livelihood, they face serious difficulties in adapting to civilian life. The main fair by the DDR is that male ex-combatants may engage in anti-social behaviour within their families and communities, contributing to an increase in economic and social (especially sexual) violence.³²

³⁰ Nkeze (2019), "Buea DDR Centre: 50 Returnees on the Roll Call", Cameroon-Tribune, 23 September 2019.

³¹ <https://actu.cameroon.com/2020/01/11/crise-anglophone-deboires-et-espoirs-des-ex-secessionnistes/>, retrieved 19 April 2020.

³² "Regional Working Group on DDR Programmes and Post-conflict Management in West Africa", Setup workshop organised by the Sahel and

In this case, the reinsertion period can last longer than the expected time.

On the other hand, and at the moment, real disarmament cannot take place if there is still shooting and killing, burning of villages, houses and homes. As long as the fight is ongoing, the arms are still there with the separatist fighters. And if they are still fighting, they can never bring all the arms to DDR centres. The simple truth about these arms (Dane guns) is that most of them are borrowed from individuals or compounds since the people of these regions have always used these guns for hunting and shooting during funeral ceremonies. In that case, the lender hands it back to the owner after his expedition, making it difficult for the DDR to get them.³³ However, everyone has to be disarmed, both the separatist fighters and the formal army for sustainable peace and tranquillity in the two Regions.

Another major difficulty is that low-income countries like Cameroon facing internal conflicts cannot do without support from the international community which, through the UN, has for several years been promoting an international political strategy based on the idea of human security. The international nature of the threat to security and the impracticality of one country, or even group of countries, dealing with these threats alone give it good grounds to seek international solidarity on this crisis.³⁴ It is well understood that the Cameroon DDR is a new creation which still needs to do a lot, especially in the domains of structural organization, material, training, collaboration/partnership, manpower, financial dispositions, and so on.

To sum up, it is well understood that the DDR in Cameroon seriously lacks proper planning of human and financial resources specifically dedicated to the centres, effective assessments and worse of all, the right kind of help to returning combatants that prevents them from becoming frustrated. Vocational training and other educational measures are greatly beneficial to returning combatants as they provide a foundation for building peaceful income-generating activities such as farming, bricklaying, carpentry, car mechanics and so forth. However, some demobilised separatists possess certain abilities that are useful in the civilian labour market, but that are neither addressed nor developed in these centres. Besides that, the domineering French language used by instructors in these centres at times does not play to their favour.³⁵

West Africa Club Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), 30 May to 1er June 2006 Volume 2, Working Documents.

³³ Interview with, Takor K. Nixon, 43, Associate Professor in History, University of Bamenda, 14 April 2020.

³⁴ Interview with, M. Obame Jean Claude, 65+, Expert CNDDR, Yaounde 20 April 2020.

³⁵ Interview with, Lukong Clinton, 26, Ex-Separatist DDR Bamenda from Bui Division, 20 April 2020.

VI. THE WAY FORWARD

Other studies could pay more attention to the technical aspects of DDR programmes such as timing, sequencing and programme design. It should, however, be noted that actors involved in DDR programs range from national and local government authorities, communities, UN agencies, the international financial institutions, bilateral donors, international and local NGOs, grassroots organizations and, of course, combatants, ex-combatants, and their dependents.

In this phase, what ex-combatants in these Regions lack is not ability but credentials since they have often missed out on formal education. Public opinion in the Anglophone Regions thus warns that training needs to be adapted to the demand for specific types of skills in the respective economies. Ex-combatants may have great difficulties during reinsertion moment in finding employment in the fields in which they had been trained.³⁶ In short, programme design should always include a thorough labour market assessment and take into account the job opportunities available in Cameroon. This explains why expertise, training, and inter-agency cooperation impact assessments need to be systematized, budgeted for, and built into programming from the conceptualization phase of DDR programmes in these Regions.

DDR programs in Cameroon must be part of an integrated national recovery strategy. This strategy should encompass economic development, security sector reform, justice and reconciliation initiatives, and the resettlement and reintegration of ex-combatants and IDPs. Making DDR part of the overall recovery strategy serves to acknowledge the importance of this task and the fact that many of the challenges to the implementation of DDR programs have ramifications for the broader recovery process. It is also a strategy that can enable ownership by ex-combatants, communities, and the government. While the success of DDR has implications for the security situation within the country, it is ultimately dependent on economic growth and employment creation.³⁷ Ex-combatants must be able to earn a livelihood through legitimate means. However, high levels of unemployment are common in post conflict societies, which make demobilization and the lasting reintegration of combatants a tough proposition.

The basic conflict resolution mechanisms are negotiation, mediation, mediation-arbitration, diplomacy, and creative peace building. If these procedures are not strictly followed in solving the crisis, then conflict will continue to exist thus making the DDR less credited. A people who were clearly identifiable are crying that they have lost their identity. So basically there is a cultural and an identity crisis. As long as

the right procedure used to solve the ongoing conflict is not well established and strictly followed up to be properly resolved, DDR can never be successful.³⁸ This DDR would have been useful after the causes have been identified, analyzed and solved.

At the DDR Centres, activities should not be created and imposed on the ex-combatants. Rather, their ideas and points of view should be first of all sought for. This could be done through interviews or one on one talk between the ex-combatants and the experts/councillors. In a similar spirit, the government of the Republic of Cameroon has to take into consideration amnesty and free political prisoners. This would be a great step to put an end to the crisis.³⁹ If this is done, the citizens of these two regions would be considerate and come together for a free and fair inclusive dialogue which shall in turn facilitate the DDR programs.

In a nutshell, DDR is a step forward to resolve the crisis. However, DDR alone cannot be expected to prevent further conflict and restore stability in Cameroon. It must be accompanied by other economic, political and social reforms. DDR must, therefore, be conceptualized, designed, planned and implemented within a wider recovery and development framework.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have examined the prospect of the newly created DDR in an attempt to solve the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. It should be noted that the transition from civil war to sustainable peace is a difficult one. The reintegration of ex-combatants, which is arguably the most difficult component of the process commonly referred to as DDR, also has the most far-reaching impact on the prospects for a sustainable peace in the Anglophone Regions. Without disarmament, demobilization and the successful reintegration of combatants, sustainable peace is impossible. There are numerous factors that can cause DDR to fail. These include the lack of funding or international support, and an unstable strategic environment. There are, however, only a handful of necessary or even sufficient factors for a successful DDR.

The will for peace in Cameroon is the basis for the beginning of a DDR programme. Accordingly, the greater the will for peace, the more likely the DDR will be completed and the more successful will be the reintegration. But it is only through the influence of push and pull factors with rewards, persuasion and coercion that the will for peace can be maintained through the course of the entire DDR programme to ensure successful reintegration of the separatists. This peace can readily fizzle out after ceasefires and peace accords are signed.

³⁶ Interview with, Ngam Confidence Nchia, 44, Associate Professor in History, University of Bamenda, 11 April 2020.

³⁷ International Peace Academy (IPA) (2002), "A Framework for Lasting Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Crisis Situations", IPA-UNDP Workshop Report, 12-13 December 2002, German House, New York, pp.5-6.

³⁸ Franziska Seethaler (2016), "Assessing the Impact of DDR Programmes: Possibilities and Challenges", United Nations University, New York, Policy Brief-March 2016, p.10.

³⁹ B. B. Mangong (2020), p.117.

Reintegration represents the most demanding of the phases of DDR since it is in competition with unemployed civilians. In this sphere, the returning refugees from neighbouring Nigeria and IDPs all over the nation will demand enough jobs for successful reintegration. And this can only be possible with the well coordinated use of every available conflict resolution tool. This applies to these Anglophones Regions with weak infrastructure: only by minimizing structural and cultural violence can long-term reintegration be achieved in these regions without unleashing new rounds of conflict.

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