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# Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration



**United Nations peace operations are the leading international partner of national institutions implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives, designing context-specific programmes for members of armed groups.**

Through a process of removing weapons from the hands of members of armed groups, taking these combatants out of their groups and helping them to reintegrate as civilians into society, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration seeks to support ex-combatants and those associated with armed groups, so that they can become active participants in the peace process. As an alternative path, allowing some ex-combatants to integrate formal uniformed services of the State allows their status to be regularized and ensures a close link between DDR and security Sector Reform.

# What is disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR)?

[Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration](#)  lays the groundwork for safeguarding and sustaining the communities to which these individuals return, while building capacity for long-term peace, security and development.

In situations where it is too early or not possible to carry out disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, the UN supports Community Violence Reduction programmes that lead to the right conditions for political processes to progress and armed groups to disband. Those can also run in parallel to DDR programmes complementing them and addressing the needs of communities in parallel to those of combatants.

## Where are we doing it?

As of 2019-2020, the team of OROLSI's Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Section has been supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes in UN Peacekeeping Operations in the Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)), the Democratic Republic of Congo ([MONUSCO](#)), and South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)).

The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Section also supports Special Political Missions in [Burundi](#) (OSASG-B), [Colombia](#), [Ethiopia](#) (UNOAU), the [Great Lakes](#) (OESG-GL), [Haiti](#) (BINUH), [Iraq](#) (UNAMI), [Libya](#) (UNSMIL), [Somalia](#) (UNSOM), and [Yemen](#) (OESGY), as well as non-mission settings such as Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Lake Chad Basin, Mozambique, Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone.

## The DDR pledge

The key outcome of the [2024 DDR Symposium](#)  was the formulation of the DDR Pledge, a collective commitment by the global disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) community to operationalize the [New Agenda for Peace](#). The pledge highlights DDR's critical role in tackling the growing threats posed by armed groups, increasing criminal activity, and escalating violence. It centers on three pillars: the Primacy of Politics, ensuring DDR aligns with political strategies and peace agreements; the Shift to Prevention, integrating DDR into conflict prevention efforts; and Partnerships and Financing, advocating for innovative funding models and strengthened partnerships. Aligned with the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, the DDR Pledge offers a strategic roadmap for future DDR initiatives, positioning the DDR

community to mitigate the human toll of weapons, foster sustainable peace, and enhance civilian protection through improved weapons and ammunition management.

## **Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and political process**

The UN is engaging more and more often with armed groups in complex mission environments. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community violence reduction officers have become the first UN staff deployed on the ground with the mandate and expertise to engage directly with combatants. They are therefore called upon to provide advice on how to engage with armed groups and ultimately contribute to the signing of an agreement.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration support to mediation processes comprises three types of activities that can be undertaken before, during and after the mediation process:

- Mediation support: deployment of experts, drafting provision of agreements, and negotiation advice;
- Analysis: mapping of armed groups and identification of entry points for programmatic engagement;
- Capacity building: strengthening the parties' ability to work constructively towards an agreement.

The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Section has deployed mediation support to Darfur, Central African Republic, Colombia, Mali and Yemen.

### **Air leaflets drop**

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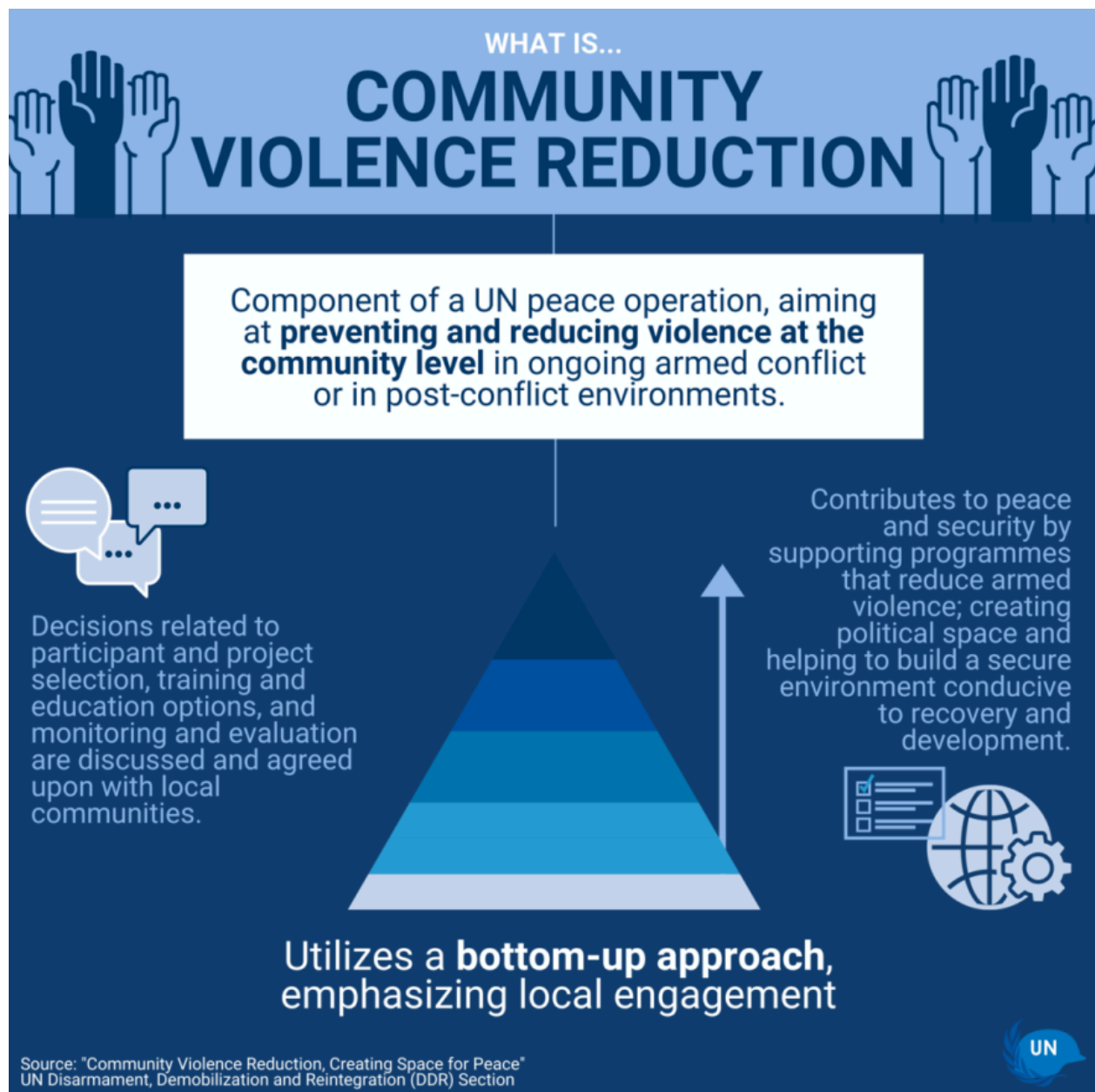


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# Community Violence Reduction

In the last decade, we have seen a shift to UN interventions taking place earlier in the peace process, with operations deployed during intense conflict. Armed groups, which are unlikely to have signed a peace agreement, are often involved in shadow economies and transnational criminal networks. In some cases, armed groups may even be indistinguishable from communities.

In response, the UN has adapted from traditional, sequenced and individual-focused disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to a more community-focused approach, known as "[Second Generation DDR](#) ". At the forefront of this is what we call Community Violence Reduction.







Community Violence Reduction activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Photo: MINUSCA/Herve Serefio

Now mandated in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Mali, the UN has implemented community violence reduction programmes encompassing a range of initiatives from labour-intensive projects, business incubation and community dialogue forums, to direct engagement with members of armed groups, as well as youth-at-risk, to prevent further recruitment. Community violence reduction also plays a key role in reducing tensions at the grassroots level to increase opportunities for social cohesion and conflict resolution.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN has successfully reprioritized its community violence reduction programmes towards sensitization, prevention and the local production of sanitary kits to support national authorities in mitigating the spread of the virus.

As the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, noted during the 10th anniversary of community violence reduction (CVR) on 16 November 2016: "CVR has proven useful in many different contexts, precisely because it is agile and people-centered...It is a watershed example of peacekeeping learning to adapt and innovate."



Watch on

### Example from the Field: Disengaging Al-Shabaab in Somalia

The 2017 report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations recognizes the role that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes play in managing the disengagement of combatants from violent extremist groups.

The UN in Somalia ([UNSOM](#)) is supporting the Government of Somalia to implement the National Programme to assist disengaged Al-Shabaab combatants in reintegrating back into society. This offers a rare window of opportunity to further deplete Al-Shabaab's ranks by offering security and alternative livelihoods. Religious mentoring and ideological rehabilitation represent a crucial component of this process. Four transitional sites receiving (ex-)combatants are currently operational across the country.

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## Related Documents

- [Pathways Home: A Retrospective Study on 25 years of United Nations Efforts to Repatriate Foreign Combatants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) 
- [2025 Somalia Lessons Learned Exercise Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration Key Takeaways](#) 
- [Regional Approaches To Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration Report](#) 
- [Weapons And Ammunition Dynamics In A Changing Disarmament Demobilization And Reintegration Context In Somalia 2024](#) 
- [Women In Armed Groups High Level Event 2025](#) 
- [Whitepaper Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration And Armed Groups Designated Terrorist Organizations](#)  [French Version]
- [Perspectives from Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration \(DDR\) on the Peace Building Architecture Review \(PBAR\)](#) 
- [Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Pledge](#) 
- [Climate Change and Armed Groups: Key Takeaways](#) 
- [Climate Change and Armed Groups: Full Report](#) 
- [Available Services and Support by the Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Section](#) 
- [Lessons Learned On Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration And Community Violence Reduction In Mali](#) 
- [DDR+ Adapting DDR Processes to New Conflict Realities](#) 
- [Leaving Conflict Firmly Behind Through The Political Transformation Of Armed Groups](#) 

- [WAM - DDR eBook](#) 
- [Weapons and Ammunition Dynamics in the Lake Chad Basin](#)
- [ZIF-DPO Expert dialogue on Armed Groups Designated as Terrorist Organizations](#) 
- [DDR Section Support to Non-Mission Settings](#) 
- [DDR Section 2021 Vision Document](#) 
- [The Evolving Nature of DDR](#) 
- [DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION \(DDR\) AND TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESSES - Lessons Learned from Recent Transition Processes](#) 
- [Gender-responsive DDR: promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda](#) 
- [Operational Funding Overview 2017-18/2018-19](#) 
- [Support to Mediation Process](#) 
- [Cradled by Conflict: Child Involvement with armed Groups in Contemporary Conflict](#) 
- [The Changing Landscape of Armed Groups: Doing DDR in New Contexts](#) 
- [Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context – Handbook for United Nations DDR practitioners](#) 
- [UN DDR in an Era of Violent Extremism: Is It Fit for Purpose?](#) 
- [DDR and Community Violence Reduction \(CVR\) - Creating Space for peace](#) 
- [Entebbe Outcome Report](#) 

## Related Links

- [The DDR Bulletin](#) 
- [United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre](#) 
- [United Nations DDR photos](#)
- [United Nations Careers](#)

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