

DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION OF TERRORIST GROUPS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) is a process that involves disarming former combatants, providing them with opportunities for livelihoods and education, and integrating them back into society as peaceful and productive citizens. This approach is intended to promote stability and prevent the resurgence of violence in conflict-affected regions. It is necessary to examine the DDR in Nigeria, and analyse its successes. The methodology adopted is the content analysis approach. The paper adopted the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) framework. The IDDRS framework provides guidelines for planning, implementing, and monitoring DDR programs, based on principles of human rights, gender sensitivity, conflict sensitivity, and the participation of all stakeholders in the DDR process. The findings revealed that the effectiveness of the DDR programs has been mixed, with some programs achieving their objectives while others have been largely ineffective. The paper concludes that implementing successful DDR programs in Nigeria requires addressing the root causes of conflicts, building trust among key stakeholders, ensuring adequate funding and political commitment, promoting social and economic integration, and involving local communities in the process. It recommends that the Nigerian government should develop a comprehensive national strategy that outlines the objectives, timelines, and resources required for the successful implementation of DDR programs.

Keywords: Disarmament, Reintegration, Terrorists, Programs, Government, Nigeria

Introduction

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) is a process that has been widely used to address conflicts in various parts of the world, including in post-conflict societies. The process involves disarming former combatants, providing them with opportunities for livelihoods and education, and integrating them back into society as peaceful and productive citizens. In Nigeria, DDR has been proposed as a strategy for addressing the menace of terrorism that has plagued the country for several years.

Terrorism in Nigeria has been a major security challenge for the country, with several terrorist groups operating in different parts of the country. These groups, including Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), have been responsible for thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions of people (Ibrahim, 2020). The Nigerian government has been using military force to combat these groups, but the approach has not been entirely successful in addressing the root causes of terrorism (Bawa & Tunku, 2019).

Nigeria has experienced multiple insurgencies and terrorist activities, which have resulted in significant human suffering, destruction of property, and displacement of people. The government has responded to these challenges by adopting various approaches, including military operations and DDR programs. DDR programs are aimed at disarming combatants, demobilizing them, and reintegrating them into society. This approach is intended to promote stability and prevent the resurgence of violence in conflict-affected regions (Onuoha, 2019).

DDR has been proposed as an alternative strategy for addressing terrorism in Nigeria. The process involves disarming terrorists, providing them with education and vocational training, and reintegrating them into society. The goal is to turn former terrorists into productive members of society who can contribute positively to the country's development (Okechukwu, 2019).

There are several challenges to implementing DDR in Nigeria, including a lack of political will, insufficient funding, and the difficulty of identifying and disarming terrorists (Aghedo & Imhonopi, 2020). Additionally, there are concerns about the potential risks of reintegrating former terrorists into society, including the possibility that they may return to terrorist activities (Okechukwu, 2019).

Despite these challenges, there are examples of successful DDR programs in other parts of the world, including in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Mwaura, 2017). These programs have been successful in disarming combatants, providing them with education and vocational training, and reintegrating them into society. Lessons from these programs can be applied to the Nigerian context to design a DDR program that addresses the unique challenges of terrorism in the country.

In recent years, there have been renewed efforts to implement DDR programs in Nigeria, particularly in the northeast region, which has been most affected by Boko Haram terrorism. The Nigerian government, in collaboration with international partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has launched several DDR initiatives aimed at promoting stability, economic growth, and social cohesion in the region (UNDP, 2018).

DDR has been proposed as a strategy for addressing terrorism in Nigeria. While there are challenges to implementing such a program, there are also examples of successful DDR programs in other parts of the world. With careful planning and implementation, DDR

could be an effective strategy for addressing the root causes of terrorism in Nigeria and promoting peace and development in the country. The paper therefore seeks to examine the DDR in Nigeria and analyse its successes. The paper is segmented into five sections, beginning with the introduction. The second section clarifies the relevant concepts, while the third section explains the methodology used. The fourth section discussed the subject matter, while the fifth section concludes the paper.

The Concept of Disarmament

Disarmament can be defined as the "reduction, limitation, or elimination of armaments" (Bishop, 2007, p. 43). According to the United Nations (UN), disarmament is "the collection, documentation, control, and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, and light and heavy weapons from combatants and often from the civilian population" (United Nations, n.d.).

Disarmament has been a key topic of discussion in international relations and peace studies. According to Biersteker and Weber (1996), disarmament can be seen as a way to reduce the risks of war and promote international security. They argue that disarmament is not only about reducing the number of weapons, but also about changing the political, economic, and social structures that contribute to the proliferation of weapons.

Similarly, Jentleson and Britton (1998) argue that disarmament can contribute to the reduction of international tensions and the promotion of peaceful coexistence. They highlight the role of disarmament in building trust between nations and creating a more stable international environment.

Disarmament can also be seen as a tool for promoting development and addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. According to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, disarmament is "not an end in itself but a means to promote human security, sustainable development, and peaceful coexistence" (Boutros-Ghali, 1995, p. 2).

In addition, disarmament can be a way to address the humanitarian impact of armed violence. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has emphasized the devastating consequences of armed conflicts and the urgent need for disarmament. The ICRC has called for "effective disarmament measures that prioritize the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law" (ICRC, n.d.).

Disarmament is a complex concept that involves multiple dimensions, including security, development, humanitarian concerns, and respect for international law. Scholars and practitioners have emphasized the importance of disarmament as a means to promote international peace and security, address social and economic challenges, and protect human rights.

The Concept of Demobilization

Demobilization is the process of discharging combatants from military service and

reintegrating them into civilian life. According to Kaldor and Vincent, demobilization is "the process of returning combatants to civilian life, dismantling the structures of warfare, and consolidating peace" (Kaldor & Vincent, 2017, p. 132).

Similarly, Berdal and Ucko define demobilization as "the process by which ex-combatants are returned to civilian life and society, and the conditions that must be created for this transition to take place" (Berdal & Ucko, 2018, p. 2).

Another definition of demobilization is provided by Annan, who describes it as "the process by which military personnel are released from their service obligations and returned to civilian life" (Annan, 2005, p. 19). This definition focuses on the release of military personnel from their obligations, which is a crucial aspect of demobilization.

Furthermore, according to the United Nations, demobilization is "the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups" (United Nations, 2019, para. 4). This definition emphasizes the formal and controlled nature of the demobilization process, highlighting the need for a structured approach to discharging combatants from armed groups.

The Concept of Reintegration of Terrorists

Reintegration of terrorists is a process that involves facilitating the return of former terrorists to society and their reintegration into their communities. According to Hansen and Sollenberg, reintegration "refers to the processes by which individuals are assisted to reintegrate into civilian life and society, and to access their human rights" (Hansen & Sollenberg, 2016, p. 5). This definition emphasizes the importance of supporting the former terrorists in their return to civilian life, including access to their basic human rights.

Similarly, Chetcuti and Faure define reintegration as "a set of activities and processes intended to facilitate the return to normal life of former members of violent extremist groups, and to prevent re-engagement in violence and criminal activities" (Chetcuti & Faure, 2020, p. 4). This definition highlights the importance of preventing former terrorists from engaging in violence or other criminal activities after their reintegration.

According to the United Nations, reintegration is "a process of restoring an individual or a group to a constructive place in society, whether they are returning from conflict, prison or other forms of exclusion" (United Nations, 2019, para. 4). This definition emphasizes the need to support individuals who have been excluded from society, including former terrorists, in returning to a constructive role in their communities.

In addition, in the context of DDR, reintegration is defined as "the process by which ex-combatants, their families, and communities acquire the capacity to cope with the social, economic, and political dimensions of sustainable reintegration" (United Nations, 2006, p. 2). This definition highlights the need to support not only the individual but also their families and communities in the reintegration process, and the importance of sustainable

reintegration.

Methodology

The methodology employed for this study is content analysis. It combines conceptual evaluation, theme analysis, and theoretical presentation. The approach of this study placed a strong emphasis on qualitative information acquired from secondary sources, such as journals, government websites, and written works. Each and every bit of data acquired for this study is relevant to it.

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) framework. The IDDRS framework was developed by the United Nations. It provides guidelines for planning, implementing, and monitoring DDR programs, based on principles of human rights, gender sensitivity, conflict sensitivity, and the participation of all stakeholders in the DDR process (United Nations, 2006).

Applying the IDDRS framework to the DDR of terrorist groups in Nigeria, the political and security context component would involve assessing the political and security situation in the country, identifying the actors involved in the conflict, and developing a comprehensive DDR strategy that takes into account the specific needs of the target population. The planning component would involve identifying the terrorist groups to be disarmed, demobilized, and reintegrated, as well as the community-based rehabilitation programs needed to facilitate their reintegration into society.

The disarmament component would involve the collection and disposal of weapons held by the terrorist groups. This could be a challenging task, as some of these groups may be well-armed and may have access to sophisticated weapons. The demobilization component would involve the release of combatants from the terrorist groups and the provision of short-term assistance to facilitate their transition to civilian life. This assistance may include counselling, medical treatment, vocational training, and education.

The reintegration component would involve the long-term process of reintegrating former combatants into society and addressing the root causes of the conflict. This could involve community-based rehabilitation programs that provide psychosocial support, education, vocational training, and access to basic services such as healthcare and housing. Additionally, efforts must be made to ensure the participation of women and other marginalized groups in the DDR process.

The monitoring and evaluation component would involve the assessment of the effectiveness of the DDR program and the identification of areas for improvement. This is a critical aspect of the DDR process as it allows for the identification of best practices and the development of evidence-based policies and programs.

The application of the IDDRS framework to the DDR of terrorist groups in Nigeria has

some challenges that need to be addressed. One of the main challenges is the issue of trust between the government and the terrorist groups. There is a lack of trust between the government and the terrorist groups, which makes it difficult to initiate dialogue and reach agreements on the DDR process. This challenge can be addressed by involving a neutral third party, such as the United Nations, to facilitate dialogue and negotiations between the government and the terrorist groups.

Another challenge is the issue of security. The terrorist groups in Nigeria are well-armed and have the ability to launch attacks on the DDR program and its participants. Therefore, it is important to have a robust security plan in place to protect the DDR process and its participants. The security plan should involve the deployment of security forces to protect the DDR program, as well as the provision of security guarantees to the terrorist groups.

Finally, the issue of financing the DDR program needs to be addressed. DDR programs are usually expensive, and it may be challenging for Nigeria to finance a comprehensive DDR program. Therefore, it is important to seek financial support from international donors and the United Nations to finance the DDR program.

The IDDRS framework provides a comprehensive approach to the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of terrorist groups in Nigeria. However, it is important to address the challenges of trust, security, and financing to ensure the success of the DDR program. By addressing these challenges, it is possible to develop a DDR program that is effective, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of the target population.

The Root Causes of Terrorism in Nigeria

Terrorism is a complex phenomenon that arises from a combination of political, economic, social, and ideological factors. In the case of Nigeria, the root causes of terrorism are multifaceted and intertwined. Some of the key factors contributing to the rise of terrorism in Nigeria include poverty, inequality, corruption, and religious extremism.

One of the primary drivers of terrorism in Nigeria is poverty. Nigeria is one of the poorest countries in the world, with over 40% of its population living in poverty (World Bank, 2021). Poverty often leads to a lack of access to education, healthcare, and basic services, which can create a sense of hopelessness and desperation among the population. Terrorist groups often exploit this sense of desperation to recruit new members by promising economic opportunities and financial support (Lamb, 2019). Inequality is another factor contributing to the rise of terrorism in Nigeria. The country has one of the highest income inequalities in the world, with the top 10% of the population owning over 40% of the country's wealth (World Bank, 2021). This creates a sense of injustice and resentment among the population, which can lead to social unrest and violence. Terrorist groups often exploit these feelings of anger and frustration to recruit new members and gain support for their cause (Okoli & Okeke-Uzodike, 2015).

Corruption is also a significant factor contributing to the rise of terrorism in Nigeria. The

country is ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, with corruption permeating all levels of society (Transparency International, 2021). Corruption undermines the rule of law and erodes public trust in government institutions. This creates a fertile ground for extremist groups to exploit grievances and recruit new members (Oluwakemi & Oluwaseun, 2021). Religious extremism is another factor contributing to the rise of terrorism in Nigeria. The country has a diverse religious landscape, with a significant Muslim population in the north and a significant Christian population in the south. Tensions between these religious groups have often led to violence and conflict, with extremist groups exploiting these tensions to advance their cause (Ibeanu, 2016).

Another factor contributing to the rise of terrorism in Nigeria is political instability. The country has experienced frequent political crises, particularly in the northern region, which has created a sense of disenfranchisement and marginalization among some communities. This sense of marginalization can lead to the formation of extremist groups, which seek to advance their political agenda through violence and terrorism (Osumah & Okwechime, 2019).

Additionally, the lack of effective governance and rule of law in some parts of Nigeria has created a breeding ground for terrorist groups. Some regions of the country have a weak or non-existent government presence, which allows extremist groups to operate with impunity and control territory (Spearin, 2017). The availability of weapons is also a factor contributing to the rise of terrorism in Nigeria. The country has a significant amount of small arms and light weapons in circulation, which have been used by terrorist groups to carry out attacks (Global Security, 2021). The porous borders of the country make it easy for weapons to be smuggled in from neighboring countries and regions, further exacerbating the problem.

Finally, external factors such as the global rise of terrorism and the spread of extremist ideologies also contribute to the rise of terrorism in Nigeria. Terrorist groups in Nigeria have been known to collaborate with other extremist groups in the region and around the world, which can provide them with resources and support (Adebayo, 2019).

Overview of Previous DDR Programs Implemented In Nigeria and Their Effectiveness

Several DDR programs have been implemented in Nigeria in response to various conflicts, including the Niger Delta insurgency, the Jos crisis, and the Boko Haram insurgency. However, the effectiveness of these programs has been mixed, with some programs achieving their objectives while others have been largely ineffective. One of the earliest DDR programs implemented in Nigeria was the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program for former combatants in the Niger Delta region. The program was designed to address the grievances of militants who had been involved in the region's long-standing conflict over oil resources. The program was successful in disarming and demobilizing the militants, but its reintegration component was less successful due to a lack of sustainable reintegration opportunities and inadequate funding (Okonta, 2011).

Another DDR program was implemented in response to the Jos crisis, which involved ethnic and religious tensions in the Plateau State. The program aimed to disarm and demobilize combatants from both sides of the conflict and reintegrate them into their communities. The program was successful in disarming and demobilizing the combatants, but its reintegration component was hampered by a lack of political will, insufficient funding, and limited community involvement (Uzodike, 2016). The most recent DDR program in Nigeria is the Operation Safe Corridor (OSC) program, which is aimed at rehabilitating and reintegrating repentant Boko Haram members into society. The program provides a safe haven for the surrendering terrorists and offers them access to rehabilitation and vocational training. Although the program has received some criticism for rewarding terrorists and not adequately addressing the root causes of terrorism in Nigeria, it has been successful in facilitating the surrender of several hundred Boko Haram members (Akinola & Olawuyi, 2021).

Some scholars have identified several challenges that have hindered the effectiveness of DDR programs in Nigeria. One of the major challenges is the lack of political will and commitment to implement the programs effectively. The Nigerian government has been criticized for not providing adequate funding for DDR programs and not fully supporting the programs' implementation (Oyefara, 2016).

Another challenge is the lack of coordination among government agencies responsible for implementing DDR programs. In some cases, different agencies have been involved in implementing different components of the program, resulting in a lack of coherence and integration in the overall approach to DDR. This lack of coordination has also led to duplication of efforts and wastage of resources (Oyefara, 2016). Furthermore, some scholars argue that DDR programs in Nigeria have not adequately addressed the root causes of conflicts, such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. These underlying issues continue to fuel conflicts, even after the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants (Uzodike, 2016).

The issue of sustainability has also been a challenge in previous DDR programs. Some scholars argue that DDR programs in Nigeria have not been sustainable, as there has been a lack of follow-up after the reintegration phase. This lack of follow-up has resulted in a high rate of recidivism, as many ex-combatants have returned to violence due to the lack of sustainable reintegration opportunities (Okonta, 2011).

previous DDR programs in Nigeria have faced several challenges, including a lack of political will, inadequate funding, lack of coordination, failure to address the root causes of conflicts, and lack of sustainability. To ensure the effectiveness of future DDR programs in Nigeria, it is essential to address these challenges and develop comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable approaches to DDR that address the underlying issues driving conflicts in the country.

Success Factors in Implementing DDR Programs in Nigeria

Implementing successful disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR)

programs in Nigeria requires addressing the root causes of conflicts, building trust among key stakeholders, ensuring adequate funding and political commitment, promoting social and economic integration, and involving local communities in the process. One of the critical success factors in implementing DDR programs in Nigeria is addressing the root causes of conflicts. DDR programs must take a holistic approach that addresses the underlying issues fuelling conflicts, such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion (Uzodike, 2016). DDR programs must focus on creating sustainable solutions that promote social and economic integration, provide education and employment opportunities, and support community development initiatives that address the root causes of conflicts.

Another success factor is building trust among key stakeholders. DDR programs must involve all stakeholders, including the government, non-governmental organizations, civil society groups, and local communities (Oyefara, 2016). Building trust requires transparent communication and active participation of stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of DDR programs. It is essential to involve local communities in the process and ensure their needs and concerns are addressed. Adequate funding and political commitment are also critical success factors in implementing DDR programs in Nigeria. DDR programs require significant financial resources to be effective, and political commitment is essential for the success of the programs (Okonta, 2011). The Nigerian government must provide sufficient funding for DDR programs and demonstrate political will and commitment to their implementation.

Promoting social and economic integration is another success factor in implementing DDR programs in Nigeria. Ex-combatants must be provided with education, employment, and economic opportunities to promote their reintegration into society (Uzodike, 2016). DDR programs must address the specific needs of different groups, such as women and youth, and promote their social and economic inclusion. Involving local communities in the DDR process is critical for its success. Local communities play a crucial role in the reintegration of ex-combatants, as they are often the first point of contact for ex-combatants (Oyefara, 2016). Local communities can provide social and economic support, facilitate access to education and employment opportunities, and help promote the social and economic integration of ex-combatants.

Comparison of Nigeria's DDR Programs to Those Implemented in Other Countries

Comparing Nigeria's DDR programs to those implemented in other countries can provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of Nigeria's approach and highlight areas for improvement. Some key comparisons are discussed below:

1. Sierra Leone: Sierra Leone's DDR program was implemented after a brutal civil war that lasted from 1991 to 2002. Like Nigeria, Sierra Leone's DDR program was aimed at disarming and reintegrating former combatants into society. However, Sierra Leone's DDR program had a stronger focus on community-based reintegration and provided vocational training and other support to ex-combatants. This approach was successful in reducing violence and promoting stability in Sierra Leone (Hovil, 2010).

2. Liberia: Liberia's DDR program was also implemented after a civil war that ended in 2003. Liberia's program was notable for its emphasis on security sector reform, which involved demobilizing and reintegrating both ex-combatants and former members of the security forces. This approach helped to rebuild trust in the security sector and promote stability in Liberia (UNDP, 2005).
3. Rwanda: Rwanda's DDR program was implemented after the 1994 genocide, which left over 800,000 people dead. Rwanda's program had a strong focus on justice and reconciliation, which included the prosecution of genocide suspects and the establishment of community-based gacaca courts. This approach helped to promote accountability and reconciliation in Rwanda (Krause & Jaspars, 2005).
4. Colombia: Colombia's DDR program is ongoing and is aimed at reintegrating ex-combatants from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) into society. Colombia's program has emphasized the importance of social and economic reintegration, which includes providing education and job training to ex-combatants. This approach has helped to promote stability and reduce violence in Colombia (United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, 2020).

In comparison to these countries, as Anyadike (2013) puts it, Nigeria's DDR programs have had mixed success. While some programs, such as the 2009 amnesty program, have been successful in reducing violence and promoting stability, other programs have been hindered by corruption, inadequate funding, and a lack of political commitment. Furthermore, Nigeria's DDR programs have not always addressed the root causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and political marginalization

Conclusion

Implementing successful DDR programs in Nigeria requires addressing the root causes of conflicts, building trust among key stakeholders, ensuring adequate funding and political commitment, promoting social and economic integration, and involving local communities in the process. Future DDR programs in Nigeria should focus on developing a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable approach that addresses the specific needs of different groups and promotes their social and economic inclusion. Comparing Nigeria's DDR programs to those implemented in other countries highlights the need for a comprehensive and participatory approach that addresses the root causes of conflict, promotes social and economic reintegration, and involves local communities. Furthermore, a focus on security sector reform, justice and reconciliation, and community-based reintegration can also contribute to the success of DDR programs in Nigeria.

Recommendations

After considering several literatures and analysing the contents, the following suggestions are made by the paper:

1. The Nigerian government should develop a comprehensive national strategy that outlines the objectives, timelines, and resources required for the successful

implementation of DDR programs in the country. The strategy should involve all relevant stakeholders, including the military, civil society organizations, and local communities.

2. The government should allocate more resources to DDR programs in Nigeria to ensure that the programs are adequately funded and implemented effectively. This will help to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the programs.
3. DDR programs in Nigeria should focus on addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, unemployment, and marginalization. This will help to prevent the recurrence of terrorism in the country and ensure that ex-combatants are effectively reintegrated into society.
4. The government should improve coordination between different agencies involved in the implementation of DDR programs to ensure that the programs are implemented effectively and efficiently.
5. DDR programs in Nigeria should prioritize the participation of women and youth, as they are often the most vulnerable to the impacts of terrorism and conflict. This will help to ensure that the programs are inclusive and address the needs of all members of society.

The government should establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess the effectiveness of DDR programs in Nigeria. This will help to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the programs are meeting their objectives.

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