

Press release

**OVER A MILLION EX COMBATANTS FROM 20 COUNTRIES ARE CURRENTLY TAKING PART IN DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES**

According to a survey carried out by the School for Peace Culture of Autonomous University of Barcelona, which is available on the school's website ([www.escolapau.org](http://www.escolapau.org)), 1,129,000 people are presently taking part in one of the different disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programs available in 20 countries. 42% of these people are members of the Armed Forces who have introduced some cut backs in their contingent at the end of an armed conflict – 37% belonged to the armed militias, 14% to guerrilla groups and 6% to paramilitary groups. Approximately 10% of these contingents are child soldiers. The cost of these 20 programs is around 2,000 million dollars, which amounts to about 1,686 US\$ per person.

Two thirds of the ex combatants come from African countries. Africa is shaping up as the continent with the largest number of countries to have developed these particular programmes. Most programmes can be found in the poorest countries on earth which are also the most disturbed by armed conflicts. Except for Colombia, demobilisation of paramilitary groups in the rest of the world runs parallel to demobilisation of the rest of the armed groups and results from global political agreements.

The survey also points out that, contrary to the widespread opinion that each ex-combatant hands his arm over when being demobilised, the global average is that one weapon is handed over for every two people who are demobilised. The programs typically last for three and a half years. The rehabilitation and reintegration stages take the longest, a minimum of two years. The World Bank and the EU are the bodies that contribute most of the financial resources required by these programs, whereas Japan, the USA, the Netherlands, Canada and the United Kingdom make the largest individual contributions. However, the survey reveals the great difficulties many countries face in order to get the funds to undertake a demobilisation process despite the relatively low cost - disarmament and reintegration of over a million ex combatants cost the equivalent of only 2% of the world's military expenditure.

The survey also highlights the risks involved in the delays produced in the implementation of these programs once a peace agreement has been signed, as many of the programs do not actually start until a year later. Furthermore, the initial disarmament stage usually takes longer than a year in most cases, due to lack of funds, bad planning or other reasons.

With regard to the introduction of measures for justice and compensation in these countries, the survey shows that when the regions in conflict agree a cease-fire and the beginning of a new political cycle, a favourable psychosocial context may emerge for amnesty, forgiveness and reconciliation. Such contexts cannot arise in the same way if only some of the actors are disarmed, since the cycle of violence will not have been closed.

The study is the first to have been carried out with such a high number of countries having been compared and has had the support of the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (Spanish Agency for International Cooperation). A list of 150 mistakes that have been spotted in DDR processes has been included at the end to provide lessons learned for future demobilisation processes. An analysis of each of the 20 countries involved can be found in the school's website.

Bellaterra, 28 February 2006-02-28

For further information, please contact Vicenç Fisas, Director of the School for Peace Culture (34-93-581-24-14)