

ERITREA (Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme, 2002-...)¹

Basic data

Population:	4.5 million (2006)
Food emergencies:	Yes
IDPs:	32,000 (2007)
Refugee population:	194,000 (2007)
GDP:	\$1,085 million (2006)
Per capita income:	\$200 (2006)
HDI:	0.483 – 157th (2005)
GDI:	0.469 – 136th (2005)
Military expenditure:	19.32% (2003)
Social / military expenditure:	Military greater than social
Military population:	4.21%
Arms embargo:	No

Map

Summary

Type of DDR	Mass disarmament and reintegration of armed forces via security-sector reform in a post-war context.
Groups to demobilise	200,000 soldiers
Executive bodies	National Commission for Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (NCDRP), with assistance from the UNDP and World Bank.
Budget	\$197.2 million
Timeline	From April 2002
Status / synopsis	Process of neutralised demobilisation for continued recruitment of troops and personnel to the armed forces. Currently, efforts are centred on the reintegration of decommissioned officers.

Context

Conflict

Eritrea achieved independence from Ethiopia in 1993, though the border between the two countries was not clearly defined, leading to fighting between the two sides from 1998 to 2000 in which more than 100,000 people died. A cessation of hostilities agreement was signed in 2000 and the UN Security Council set up the UNMEE peace-keeping mission to supervise the arrangement. The year ended with the signing of a peace agreement in Algiers. This stipulated

¹ This report draws extensively on the following sources, from which only direct quotations are cited: World Bank (2002, 2007), Healy (2007), Mehreteab (2007), UNDP Eritrea (2004, 2006a, 2006b) and Pretorius et al. (2006)

that both sides would abide by the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Commission (EEBC), which was charged with establishing a definitive border on the basis of the relevant colonial agreements (1900, 1902 and 1908) and international law. In April 2002, the EEBC issued its decision, which assigned the disputed border village of Badme (the epicentre of the conflict which was at that time administered by Ethiopia) to Eritrea, a decision rejected by Ethiopia. As of 1 December, the border was established virtually on the basis of the colonial treaties. As a result, concern increased over the volatility of the situation and the risk that it would descend into a new outbreak of violence. However, both governments rejected the EEBC's suggestion that it should suspend its functions and establish the border demarcation solely on paper, and reiterated that they did not want a return to hostilities.²

Security-sector reform

As part of security-sector reform, the Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (DRP) in Eritrea is a strategy to reduce the number of military officers in the country and generate significant savings to state budgets.

Background to DDR

Eritrea has been called "a mobilised nation" (Healy 2007: 6). In 1993, on the eve of independence from Ethiopia, 95,000 guerrilla combatants became members of the armed forces, whilst in 1997 around 54,000 soldiers demobilised. The demobilisation and reintegration process was considered a success, though later war with Ethiopia reversed this process.

Mehreteab (2007; cf. European Commission 2002: Annex I, 16) offers a list of the lessons learned and not learned in this demobilisation exercise.

Lessons learned:

- The need to consider social reintegration;
- The need of a clear definition of structure and institutional responsibilities;
- The necessity to incorporate a gender dimension in the programme;
- The necessity for training in accordance with the labour market;
- The need for participation from NGOs and the private sector (more in theory than practice); and
- The necessity to carry out a survey on soldier profiles.

Lessons not learned:

- The need to design a general framework for rehabilitation and renewal;
- The necessity to incorporate reconstruction, renewal, rehabilitation, and reintegration programmes; and
- The need for participation from beneficiaries, e.g. ex-combatants and communities.

Programme design

Type and designation of DDR

Mass demobilisation, reinsertion, and reintegration of armed forces via security-sector reform in a post-war context.

² Adapted from School for a Culture of Peace (2008: 52)

DRP, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme. Financed by the World Bank, the Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project - Emergency Recovery Loan (EDRP-ERL) is almost synonymous with DRP and is sometimes referred to as the DRP for Eritrea.

Executive bodies

The body responsible for the programme in Eritrea is the NCDRP, created by the government of Eritrea in April 2001. The NCDRP has carried out programme planning with technical assistance and training from the UNDP from 2002 to 2006, and cooperation from the World Bank. The execution of projects falls to government bodies, private consultants, and NGOs.

Guiding principles

According to the European Commission (2002: Annex I, 19), the guiding principles of the programme in Eritrea are the following:

- An integrated approach to demobilisation, reinsertion, and reintegration;
- Increased attention paid to psychosocial needs and support services for demobilised soldiers and their families;
- Inclusive reintegration support programmes so as to promote social cohesion;
- Professional training designed according to labour market analysis;
- Counselling and training in the development of micro-enterprise;
- Gender awareness and sensitivity to the needs of disabled persons; and
- An implementation of components by existing institutions and organisations.

The EDRP-ERL includes within its demobilisation project the following objectives:

- The transfer of economic resources from the military to social sector, and
- The strengthening of institutional capabilities and reinforcement of macroeconomic stability.

Participants

Around 300,000-350,000 soldiers were mobilised during the war in Eritrea. Around 40,000 had already formed part of the armed forces before the war, another 40,000 were reincorporated ex-soldiers (see Background), and the rest were new recruits. The government proposed a demobilisation of 200,000 soldiers ("Assisting Eritrea..." 2002).

Groups with specific needs

According to one survey (Mehreteab 2007: 46), the composition of the armed forces reflects a certain set of characteristics:

- 54% of soldiers are between the ages of 20 and 29,
16% are considered to be disabled, and
13% are considered to have psychological problems.

Given that the minimum age for recruitment to the armed forces is 18, there are no child soldiers in the military; nevertheless the programme in Eritrea identifies soldiers under the age of 25 as belonging to or in need of specialised programming.

Budget and financing

In April 2002, the World Bank budgeted a total of \$197.2 million for EDRP. This works out to an average of \$985 per soldier for the 200,000 soldiers planned for demobilisation. The distribution of resources for this budget was the following:

Component	\$ Millions	%
Demobilization	9,2	4,7
Reinsertion (cash)	105	53,2
Reinsertion (in kind)	15	7,6
Reinsertion (NCDRP)	35	17,7
Reintegration (sector programs)	15	7,6
Special target groups	2	1
Institutional strengthening	1,2	0,6
Executive Secretariat	5,4	2,7
Contingencies	9,4	5
Total (estimado)	197,2	100

Source: World Bank (2002: 6)

It is important to note that reinsertion packages count for more than 60% of the budget, whilst reintegration projects, chiefly micro-credit, counts for a fourth of it.

The project is financed with an Emergency Recovery Loan, with contributions from the following three sources:

1. An initial pledge from the World Bank, through the African Infrastructure Fund, of \$60 million for the period from 2002 to 2008, though currently more than \$64 million has been paid out.
2. A contribution of \$15 million from the WFP in the form of food subsidy.
3. A Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) managed by the World Bank to cover outstanding budgetary costs. At a conference of donors held in October 2001, the World Bank pledged \$37 million to the MDTF. Of this, \$24 million has already been paid out. The European Commission, expressly mentioning demobilisation as a priority for cooperation with Eritrea, pledged 47 million euros (\$42 million in 2001) through the European Development Fund, and of this amount, 27 million euros had been paid by 2005. The other 20 million euros are allotted for post-conflict renewal. The Netherlands gave 4 million euros to a pilot programme designed for 5,000 ex-combatants and pledged an additional 12.5 million euros. Denmark pledged 2.5 million euros and Norway 1 million euros. Other donors who pledged funds, according to the World Bank, include Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland (European Commission 2002, 2007).

The World Bank's Post-Conflict Fund also contributed \$700,000 as support to the government of Eritrea in preparation for a post-conflict project.

The UNDP's Technical Assistance Programme (TAP) was financed in part by USAID (\$580,000) and by the UNDP itself (\$200,000) (USAID 2004).

The Japan International Cooperation Agency allocated approximately 1.5 million euros to the vocational training of around 500 ex-combatants over the 2005-07 period (JICA 2007).

Schedule

Initially, the government of Eritrea planned a demobilisation period of a year or a year and a half, and programmes of reintegration for five years. A pilot project designed for 65,000-70,000 participants was planned for November 2001 after the NCDRP was created earlier that year.

Earlier that autumn, the government announced it had already demobilised 20,000 persons (IRIN [2001], Mehreteab [2007: 57] offers a detailed schedule).

The EDRP as a project was completed by the World Bank. The project consisted of 18-24 months of demobilisation and reinsertion, which began in April 2002, and three to four years of reintegration, which was to be completed by the end of 2007. In both broad areas, the programme has not been able to keep to schedule. Demobilisation was carried out from July 2002 until June 2006. The reintegration of ex-combatants should have occurred over a period of three to four years following demobilisation. The World Bank fixed December 2008 as its conclusion date for EDRP. The UNDP's Technical Assistance Programme and USAID, originally planning to run from April to December 2002, wound up prolonging their operations until December 2006.

Phases

According to the UNDP (2006b: 1), "the demobilisation programme for Eritrea is arguably one of the best planned programmes of its kind." However, Mehreteab (2007) argues that there is considerable difference between what has been planned and what has been executed.

Disarmament and demobilisation

Initially designed in 2002 to demobilise 200,000 combatants over a period of 18 to 24 months, disarmament and demobilisation has involved the return of military equipment such as arms and uniforms, identification, transport to decommissioning centres, information on the process, a medical review, and later transport to reinsertion centres. A pilot project was organised for the disarmament and demobilisation of 5,000 soldiers, for a larger process divided over three phases with demobilisations of 60,000-70,000 soldiers per phase. In the first of these three phases, priority is given to "special groups", that is, women, disabled persons, veterans, and economically productive persons, as well as re-mobilised soldiers (World Bank 2002: 8-10). The decommissioning process is supposed to last for approximately a week and for each week, at each centre, the process will decommission 500 soldiers.

A pilot project was conducted from April to September 2002. According to the UNDP, 104,400 soldiers had demobilised by the end of 2006, whilst the World Bank took stock of 65,000 demobilised soldiers within its programme by the end of 2007. In addition to being slow, the demobilisation process was frustrated by two processes running in parallel: continued recruitment of combatants and reintegration of combatants within a "militarised work service" (see the Reintegration section below). As a result of this, the number of soldiers in the military rose from 300,000 at the end of the war in Eritrea to 350,000-420,000 soldiers by the end of 2007, with half this number in active military service and the other half in the "militarised work service" (Mehreteab 2007).

Mehreteab (2007: 34) argues that there is no "political will to demobilise soldiers/combatants" and claims that most demobilised combatants are disabled, chronically ill, or pregnant or nursing women. The military, additionally, has recruited "nearly the same number" of youth. Viewed in this light, the priority to demobilise "special groups" has been little more than a substitution of these groups by male youth. Mehreteab sees in these facts the cause behind donors' withdrawal of support for the demobilisation process, starting in 2005, and their transfer of primary interests to, initially, reintegration projects for already demobilised soldiers, and later, general programmes for development.³

³ See also Pretorius et al. (2006: 88 and Annex II, 54)

Reinsertion

A grant under the Transitional Safety Net (TSN) supports reinsertion efforts in Eritrea. Salary for demobilised soldiers is based on the \$50 monthly salary that a regular soldier receives, a sum in theory sufficient to support a family. TSN consists of cash payments of an average \$525 per demobilised soldier, though each individual amount depends on rank and time served in the military. If we add the WFP's food contribution, the average payment works out to \$600 per person on average. Some disabled combatants receive additional aid of between \$300 and \$450. Payments are made in two instalments: during the first three months of decommissioning and between the fourth and sixth months.

In terms of implementation of this component, the UNDP talks about a monthly payment of around \$33 over six to 12 months for (140,400?) ex-combatants, whilst the World Bank claims to have already paid out \$330 per capita in allowances to 65,000 ex-combatants.

Reintegration

The reintegration process slowed down at the end of 2006 but recuperated in 2007. By October 2007, assistance for integration had reached 44,432 ex-combatants and other community members of a final total goal of 83,868.

Employment reintegration

In 2006, 1,722 demobilised soldiers received a total \$1.47 million as part of a Microcredit and Loan Plan.

Some of these demobilised soldiers were assigned to "militarised work service" as part of a government development and reconstruction campaign called Warsai Yekaalo. In exchange for nominal remuneration for an unspecified amount of time, or until the border with Ethiopia settled, the government requested a promise from soldiers to work for the country's reconstruction. Meanwhile, demobilisation and reintegration rhetoric covered up the real character of this campaign. At the start of 2003, for example, 3,000 soldiers employed in civil roles were considered "demobilised", but under a promise to continue as employees for two more years in the same institutions. The Eritrean government justifies the recruitment of new soldiers and this type of reintegration in the military on the grounds that it is stabilising the situation with Ethiopia.⁴

Training

The Ministry of Education runs rural-development activities and vocational training programmes for creating micro-enterprise, although there tends to be a lack of material resources and specialists for training teachers.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency has financed and given technical support for a project to train ex-combatants for employment. The Ministry of Education oversees this project. From 2005 to 2007, the ministry ran 23 courses in construction, hairdressing, agriculture, plumbing, etc., with participation from around 500 ex-combatants. 98.9% of participants finished their course and more than 60% found employment, 45% in the first five months after completion and in the field in which they had received training. From this project, with cooperation from the Savings and Microcredits Program, ex-combatants have also opened businesses (JIAC 2007).

⁴ A discussion on the positive and negative aspects of the socioeconomic function played by these oversized armed forces, both as a source of employment for youth and as a place of ideological indoctrination, for instance, can be found in Healy (2007: 8) and Mehreteab (2007: 58)

The National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) has organised training courses for women ex-combatants in tailoring, craftsmanship, and hairdressing. Designed for 230 participants, NUEW plans to offer these women the necessary equipment and resources for income generation after training (Seyoum 2007).

Psychosocial assistance

The NCDRP acknowledges the importance of psychosocial assistance for ex-combatants returning to their communities of origin and for community reintegration. As such, the UNDP's TAP has worked to train 500 psychosocial counsellors. However, Mehreteab considers this initiative to be insufficient and warns of the amount of psychological problems, high levels of disorientation, and a rise in suicide and alcoholism amongst ex-combatants.

Vulnerable groups

Differentiated assistance is offered to disabled persons in the form of counselling, vocational training, loans, employment, grants, and access to housing. Specific orientation is provided for persons with HIV/AIDS. In 2006, the Ministry of Employment proposed allocating \$2.6 million, funded by the World Bank, for offering loans to disabled demobilised soldiers (Seyoum 2006).

Lessons learned

Reports by Healy (2007), including the conference paper by Mehreteab, and Pretorius et al. (2006) record the evaluations of and lessons learned from the programme in Eritrea.

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Glossary

DRP	Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
EDRP-ERL	Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project - Emergency Recovery Loan
EEBC	Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks (UN)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
NCDRP	National Commission for Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme
TA(P)	Technical Assistance (Programme/Project to Demobilize Soldiers)
TSN	Transitional Safety Net

UNDP United Nations Development Programme
USAID United States Agency for International Development