

Analysis

'What are all the soldiers going to do?' Demobilisation, reintegration and employment in Rwanda

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Western donors are heavily engaged in Rwanda's Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme for former combatants. This engagement reflects the commitment of the donors to implement a new post-conflict agenda in a very difficult situation. When this agenda goes beyond mere economic development, we argue that donors should not drift too far away from their first task: combating poverty. More often than not, development and security are two sides of one coin. Addressing one side without considering the other is bad practice. Demobilisation is really a topic that has both a developmental as well as a security aspect.

Donors, as well as the Rwandan government, focus too narrowly on the security or military aspect of demobilisation. This reflects the status of the Rwandan government. It is very focussed on its own security to the detriment of other elements. We argue that these other elements, access to jobs and education, equity and broad based development should be dealt with as a matter of priority. If not, they will once more undermine security. Given the enormous amount of money invested in the demobilisation programme, donors should do much more to use their monitoring capacities to their full potential.

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Introduction: the security-development nexus in central Africa

Since 1990, with a climax in 1994 and continuing through until the time of writing, Rwandan forces are engaged in bitter and bloody conflicts. Rwandans against Rwandans, soldiers against civilians, men against women and ethnic groups against ‘the enemy’, Rwanda has it all. As a result of civil war and massacres, Rwandan society is deeply scarred. The legacy of this conflict has reached huge proportions: many households have lost one or several members, one third of all households are female headed, several thousand children are orphans, approximately 100,000 people are in prison. From 1996 till 2003 Rwandan forces were engaged in enduring combat operations in eastern Congo. Political power is firmly in the hands of former exiles in Uganda. It is in this context of a society under permanent stress that we undertook a study of demobilisation and re-integration of former combatants.

Development agencies, quite understandably, focus on poverty alleviation, which is their central concern. In the last few years however, these agencies faced the fact of conflict, war, massacres and even genocide in the countries in which they were promoting anti-poverty policies and implementing programmes for economic development. These agencies, together with scholars working on development, realised the need to study and tackle economic development and security as two elements of one policy environment. On the one hand, security is not a sufficient condition for development, but it is a necessary one. Without security, economic activity readily takes the form of predation by warlords or by corrupt elites. Development—defined as economic activities that benefit the majority of the population—will not take place. On the other hand, economic development contributes to security. Development allows otherwise marginalised sections of the population to be integrated in the realm of mainstream society. Integration or broad-based development, a concept we discuss in detail elsewhere,² is also the key concept of the development-security nexus: development that benefits the majority of a countries’ citizens, in a secure and stable environment, is the best guarantee to maintain peace and stability. The concept of human development as often used in the literature, also applies. Human development is defined (UNDP, 1990) in terms of the quality of people’s lives, as widening people’s choices and capabilities (Kingma, 2000).

Broad-based or human development is the background for our analysis of demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants in this study. Demobilisation is too often

understood and practised in a very limited sense as the rendering of weapons. From the literature on the security-development nexus, it is very clear that demobilisation entails a much wider set of issues.³ Demobilisation, in the framework of human development, in fact touches the core functions of the state. It raises questions such as:

- What is the relationship between civilian and military authorities and, more in particular, do civilian authorities have the capacity to control the security forces?
- Should a state demobilise when rebel groups or other states pose a threat to the stability of the country?
- When the war is over, can we truly believe that the military are out of politics or that civil authorities can keep them out of politics and keep them focussed on external threats?
- Can one stick to the notion of 'security' as a public good, thereby avoiding that it is privatised and turned into a commodity which can then be bought from private security companies?

For the donor community, the security-development nexus poses a number of challenges:

- How can a donor react to a rapidly changing security situation, in particular, are not events and players on the ground moving faster than donors?
- How can cooperation between the offices in charge of development assistance on the one hand and the military observers on the other hand be improved?
- Can effective programmes of economic reintegration of former combatants be set-up in a country torn by conflict, war and genocide?

We cannot cover all these important questions in this paper. We will focus on the current situation, social as well as economic, faced by former combatants and the effectiveness of the ongoing demobilisation programme to deal with the concerns of the former combatants.

The donor and development communities in Africa are confronted with an overriding issue: can one accept that the primary agents of change on which development interventions tend to be based—a functioning bureaucracy and a coherent civil society—do not operate along Western lines in the way that the donor community would like to

believe it does? (Hendrikson, 1999, p. 11) Formulated otherwise, the problem for donors and western policymakers is: 'Can we rely on the state which we are dealing with?' This question addresses the nature of African politics in a post-conflict environment. One may argue that Rwanda, compared with other African states, corresponds to the image of a functioning bureaucratic state. However, the nature of the current regime is ambivalent; we notice a demonstrated willingness to progress in the justice sector, including the move forward with Gacaca tribunals and the release of some 30,000 prisoners. At the same time however, we also observe the regime's engagement in the war in the DRC and its unwillingness to open up the political debate. Human rights organisations have expressed criticism on the concentration of political power. According to several UN reports, the Rwandan and Ugandan military gained from the exploitation of Congo's mineral wealth.

Clearly, as Robinson (2001) argues, a state is needed to foster change and spur development, but what kind of state? From the Rwandan genocide (1994) we have learned that a strong state can use its strength to kill its own citizens. We argue that the security forces (army, police, ...) are key players in this framework. They can be on the developmental side of history, but they can also be on the destructive side. The management of a country's security forces is therefore of prime importance. Ngaruko and Nkurunziza (2000) for example describe the Burundian army as the protector of the predatory nature of the Burundian bureaucratic state.⁵

Donors for their part are now deeply involved in areas which, until recently, they considered to be far beyond their mandate. These areas are democratisation, security, good governance, justice and reconciliation. The UN recognizes demobilisation and reintegration as critical parts of post-war peace building (Boutros-Ghali, 1994, p. 7 and the Copenhagen Declaration adopted by the World Summit for Social Development in 1995). The present Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, writes in a 1998 report that the reintegration of ex-combatants into productive society is one of the priorities of post-conflict peace building (UN, 1998 from Kingma, 2000). It is not the case that regimes are either at war or in peace. Most conflict or post-conflict societies, Rwanda for certain, have features of both war and peace. As Uvin (2001) writes in a recent article on donor engagement in Rwanda:

*Rwanda has emerged as one of the countries where the new post-conflict agenda is being most strongly implemented, under extremely difficult conditions.*⁶

If donors would stop aiding African governments and regimes because they violate human rights or even because they engage in war, they would have to leave Africa on its own. Reality on the ground just tells us that all African regimes violate human rights to a smaller or larger extent. Therefore, donors often choose a policy of ‘constructive engagement’, a policy that does not turn a blind eye to abuses and wrongdoings, but that at the same time refuses to give up on the country as a result of those abuses. This is a very difficult policy path. If donors want to continue along this path, we suggest, at the end of this paper, that they increase their monitoring capacities and efforts.

In the remainder of this study, we present the methodology of our fieldwork in section two. Section three deals with Rwanda’s ongoing demobilisation and reintegration programme. Section four relates the outcome of our interviews. In section five, we compare the income level and the social status of farmers and ex-combatants and in section six we discuss the key problems of the reintegration programme that we have found during our work.

Method of the fieldwork

The fieldwork for this study took place during the months of February and March 2003. The authors spent a total of 45 days working on this project in Rwanda. They interviewed specialists working in the demobilisation programme and in the donor community. The authors also interviewed 26 ex-combatants, from the former regime’s Rwandan army (Forces Armées Rwandaises, FAR) as well as from the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA, the successor of the RPF, the Rwandan Patriotic Front). As usual with surveys, the names of the interviewed soldiers are not mentioned. The number of interviewed combatants does not provide a representative sample of demobilised Rwandan soldiers. A representative survey was beyond the scope of the present research. The interviews with the former soldiers were semi-structured and open ended, with a focus on the economic reintegration of ex-combatants in Rwandan society. Interviews with ex-combatants were performed in Kigali and in Butare. Although our interviews do not yield information that is representative for Rwanda’s ex-combatants, we use these interviews *to measure the temperature* of our interviewees. What are the themes these

ex-combatants bring up during the discussions? What is their economic and social position in post-genocide Rwanda *vis-à-vis* other groups in the population? What are their major concerns today in Rwanda? Are there objective and verifiable reasons for these concerns?

Apart from the fact that we only have a small sample, we were also confronted with a range of other constraints during our work. The authorities in charge of the demobilisation program in Kigali (the Rwandan Demobilisation Program, RDP) did not allow the researchers to use the data that they have collected on all former combatants.⁷ Officially, these data contain information that falls within the domain of the security of the state. The researchers were told that there exists a file with data on some 20,000 former combatants. This is said to contain information on the age, residence, grade in the army, present occupation and year of demobilisation of the ex-combatants. Representatives of the donor community, especially some embassies who are involved in the demobilisation programme, told the researchers that they had not requested the Rwandan Demobilisation Program (RDP) to grant access to the data file. The RDP stated it would grant donors access to the data, if they requested it. However, donors, even those involved in the demobilisation programme, apparently do not have the time or the capacity to get involved in analytical work on this issue. The attitudes of the authorities and of the donors directly constrain the space in which research on demobilisation can be conducted.

Rather than a survey or exhaustive summary of existing reports on demobilisation, this study offers evidence of key problems that are currently neglected. The study is also the result of confrontations of officials with evidence from our interviews with ex-combatants. In this way, we hope to make a small contribution to bottom-up research on post-genocide Rwanda.

The ongoing programme of demobilisation and reintegration

The Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP, 2002) offers a framework for financing the return to peaceful and sustainable situations for combatants from nine different countries in central Africa, i.e. Namibia, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Republic of Congo, Central-African Republic, Burundi and Zimbabwe. It applies to the demobilisation of 350,000 combatants in the

Table 1. Population displacement in the Republic of Congo 1998–2002

| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Refugees | 21,000 | 39,870 | 12,340 | 119,150 | 109,150 |
| IDPs | 805,000 | 650,000 | 125,000 | 139,000 | 68,000 |

course of 3.5 years for each country and 5 years for the entire programme. The budget for the whole programme is 500 million dollar, of which 350 million dollar have been pledged by donors to a Multi-Donor Trust Fund set up by the World Bank. MDRP has four components: (i) national programs (the largest component); (ii) special projects for target groups; (iii) regional activities; and (iv) programme management.⁸

For the Rwandan part of the MDRP, since 1997, some 18,000 FPR combatants were demobilised. At the same time, some 15,000 ex-FAR members were reintegrated in the standing army (Rwandan Patriotic Army, RPA). The RPA now has a 50/50 balance of FPR and ex-FAR military personnel. Two stages of the demobilisation programme have been completed, each stage having three phases. In each phase, a number of combatants were demobilised. Ex-FAR personnel returning to Rwanda were received in so-called *Ingando*, or solidarity camps, where they received civic education and information on the government's policies.⁹ The education received in these camps, organised by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, was criticised by outsiders as a course in FPR political ideology. The re-education programme was not only addressed to ex-FAR but also to students, government officials and other citizens.¹⁰

After the first stage, the supervision of the programme, at least from the donor side, was given to the World Bank.¹¹ When we discussed the programme with the representative of the World Bank, he told us that Rwanda was doing very well, compared to other countries in the region, e.g. Angola, which had not yet started to demobilise soldiers. At the time of our field work (February to March 2003), the government aimed at the demobilisation of another 20,000 combatants. While in previous stages, old, sick and wounded soldiers were dismissed from the army only to be replaced by new recruits, this time the program aims at net demobilisation, meaning no enrolment of new soldiers to replace the demobilised ones. In that respect, it is important to distinguish ex-FAR combatants who are integrated as soldiers in the RPA and combatants (both FPR as ex-FAR) who are actually demobilised.

Two combatants whom we interviewed for example, had served in the FAR

until 1994, then joined the RPF (now RPA) and were demobilised only in 1998. The re-integration of former FAR soldiers and other combatants was undertaken for military and political reasons. The new leadership wanted a strong fighting force for operations in the Congo. They also wanted to widen the ethnic composition of the military to avoid the impression of a mono-ethnic army. Rwanda is not the only country in Africa where a programme of demobilisation is used for the upgrading of the army. Kingma (2000, pp. 26–27) argues that a significant reduction in the number of soldiers should be the core of every demobilisation program. In fact, some African armies have used the opportunity to make the force ‘leaner and meaner’.

The ongoing demobilisation program gives three instalments of each 100,00 RWF (600 RWF = 1 Euro) to a former combatant with several months in between each instalment. Beneficiaries need to visit the demobilisation office in their prefecture before they receive their instalments. Former combatants hold a demobilisation card with their photo and number.¹² The third instalment is only given when the beneficiary has written a project to demonstrate what he or she will do with the money received. These project proposals are to be reviewed by a commission at the level of the sector of residence of the former combatant ‘Commission de développement de secteur, CDC’. Twelve Provincial Programme Officers (PPO’s) have been trained in assisting, reviewing and monitoring projects of ex-combatants. Project examples could be an investment in membership of a cooperative, the construction of a house, At the time of our fieldwork, there were no clear guidelines for the sector committees nor for the beneficiaries which set out what constitutes a good or acceptable project. The committees will thus have a large degree of discretion in decision-making. Numerous respondents revealed to us their fear that local authorities are insufficiently trained and equipped, a problem that is of course a general concern of the ongoing policy of decentralisation. As often in Rwanda, local administrators are not necessarily entrepreneurial types; they limit their job to the supervision and the control of a prescribed area or section of the population.

In a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation, dated December 2002, the Head of the European Delegation, Jeremy Lester, expressed serious concerns regarding the lack of preparation, social as well as psychological, for civic life of former combatants in stage II of the Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme. Apparently, once the programme was managed by the Demobilisation Commission (from stage II onwards), the attention for civic and peace education vaporised. In his

letter, Mr Lester also pleaded for a better integration of employment programs with the demobilisation programme (Lester, 2002).

Outcome of the interviews

In each interview with former combatants, we collected information on their age, the army in which they served (FAR, RPF or Abagenzi), the grade they had, the year of entry in that army, the year of demobilisation, the reason for demobilisation, the level of schooling obtained, the occupation after demobilisation, the monthly salary in the army, current income and the amount of demobilisation instalments received at the time of the interview. The results are presented in Table 2. Most of our interviewees were soldiers, first soldiers or corporals, who were members of the FAR or the RPF. The ex-FAR were demobilised upon return to Rwanda from Congo and moved back to the rural area to take up farming. RPF soldiers in our sample were demobilised because they were wounded or they became too old for the army. After demobilisation, they often stayed in Kigali. The officers in our sample had finished higher education. We will discuss the salary issue in section 6.

To bring some order in the information we collected through our interviews, we will group the information in several topics of importance to former combatants.

Employment and training

In most if not all interviews, the lack of jobs in Rwanda in general and for former combatants in particular was the main concern of our interviewees. In this respect, it is very strange that the documents we consulted make few efforts to discuss this problem or to offer suggestions. The documents on demobilisation, including those written by World Bank experts, seem to consider demobilisation as an administrative process with little consideration of underlying economic issues. The economic component in the demobilisation and reintegration process, the search for an economic activity for former combatants, appears not to be the prime concern of the administrators.

We found a good example that demonstrates that progress is possible. In the capital of Kigali, the researchers visited the 'Programme Prioritaire Générateur d'Emploi', an employment program financed in the framework of the 7th European Development Fund (EDF). The programme employs qualified former combatants, but also people of other vulnerable groups such as widows, in public works. Its administrator is an

Table 2. Past and current social and economic status of interviewed former combatants

| Id | Age | Sex | Army | Grade | Army entry | Demob. | Reason | Sch. | Profession | Army salary | | Income 2002 RWF | Income in US\$ | R/U | Rec. |
|----|-----|-----|------|-------------|------------|--------|------------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|-----|---------|
| | | | | | | | | | | RWF | salary US\$ | | | | |
| 1 | 31 | m | RPF | Soldier | 1993 | 2002 | Wounded | 0 | Soudure | 23,800 (02) | 50 | ? | ? | r | 300,000 |
| 2 | 27 | m | Aba | Soldier | 1996 | 2000 | Captured | 1 | Farmer | - | - | ? | ? | r | 150,000 |
| 3 | 42 | m | RPF | Soldier | 1994 | 2002 | Choix | 0 | Farmer | 23,800 (02) | 50 | ? | ? | r | 200,000 |
| 4 | 25 | m | RPF | Soldier | 1998 | 2002 | Wounded | 1 | Trade | 24,800 (02) | 52 | 50,000 | 110 | u | 200,000 |
| 5 | 29 | m | FAR | 1st soldier | 1991 | 2001 | Captured | - | Farmer | 5,000 (91) | 50 | ? | ? | r | 150,000 |
| 6 | 34 | m | FAR | 1st soldier | 1992 | 2002 | Captured | 1 | Farmer | 6,000 (92) | 65 | ? | ? | r | 100,000 |
| 7 | 41 | m | FAR | Corporal | 1984 | 1996 | Returned | 1 | Driver | 8,400 (90) | 135 | 35,000 | 75 | r | 170,000 |
| 8 | 43 | m | FAR | Corporal | 1980 | 1997 | Returned | 1 | Menuisier | 8,400 (90) | 135 | 20,000 | 45 | r | 150,000 |
| 9 | 32 | m | FAR | Corporal | 1990 | 1996 | Returned | 2 | Day labour | 8,400 (90) | 135 | 15,000 | 33 | u | 0 |
| 10 | 18 | m | Aba | Soldier | 1994 | 2001 | Captured | 0 | Farmer | - | - | ? | ? | r | 100,000 |
| 11 | 36 | m | RPF | Corporal | 1991 | 2002 | Wounded | 1 | Farmer | 24,800 (02) | 52 | ? | ? | r | 200,000 |
| 12 | 39 | m | FAR | Sergeant | 1987 | 1998 | Captured | 2 | Farmer | 9,000 (90) | 145 | ? | ? | r | 100,000 |
| 13 | 56 | m | FAR | Soldier | 1994 | 1997 | Old age | 0 | Farmer | - | - | ? | ? | r | 150,000 |
| 14 | 27 | M | FAR | Corporal | 1990 | 1997 | Returned | 2 | Farmer | 8,400 (90) | 135 | ? | ? | r | 0 |
| 15 | 46 | m | FAR | Sgt-Major | 1977 | 1996 | Old age | 3 | Driver | 24,000 (90) | 380 | 42,000 | 90 | u | 150,000 |
| 16 | 30 | m | FAR | Soldier | 1990 | 1997 | Returned | 1 | Farmer | 5,000 (90) | 80 | ? | ? | r | 0 |
| 17 | 26 | m | FAR | Soldier | 1992 | 1995 | Captured | 2 | Farmer | - | - | ? | ? | r | 0 |
| 18 | 32 | m | FAR | Sergeant | 1989 | 1997 | Returned | 1 | Student | 12,000 (92) | 130 | - | - | r | 0 |
| 19 | 34 | m | FAR | Soldier | 1992 | 1996 | Returned | 2 | Day labour | 6,000 (92) | 65 | ? | ? | r | 0 |
| 20 | 36 | m | FAR | Corporal | 1990 | 1996 | Returned | 2 | Day labour | 8,400 (90) | 135 | ? | ? | u | 0 |
| 21 | 39 | m | FAR | Corporal | 1985 | 1999 | Returned | 2 | Police | - | - | - | - | u | 0 |
| 22 | 55 | m | RPF | Captain | 1991 | 1997 | Old age | 3 | Pastoralist | 67,000 (97) | 200 | ? | ? | u | 270,000 |
| 23 | 45 | m | FAR | Lieutenant | 1980 | 94-98 | Jalousness | 2 | Fishing | 14,800 (93) | 120 | ? | ? | u | 160,000 |
| 24 | 37 | m | RPF | Soldier | 1991 | 1997 | Wounded | 1 | Trade | 11,000 (97) | 30 | ? | ? | u | 270,000 |
| 25 | 29 | m | RPF | Soldier | 1992 | 1997 | Familial | 2 | Driver | 11,500 (97) | 30 | ? | ? | u | 270,000 |
| 26 | 35 | m | FAR | Soldier | 1987 | 92-98 | Familial | 2 | Macon | 12,700 (98) | 40 | ? | ? | u | 270,000 |

advocate of urban development projects, because, as he says, the city of Kigali is growing rapidly both in area covered and in population. Urban development has never been a priority in Rwanda, because of the decentralisation of decision making the city of Kigali can now run its own programmes. This programme is one of the results of decentralisation. Each district in Kigali has a list of unemployed persons ready to be engaged in public works programmes. They are offered a contract of five to six months in which they earn 1,000 RWF (less than €2) every day. This is less than the earnings of an average urban household, but almost 50 per cent more than the monthly income of a rural household (see section 6). Half of this amount is put on a bank account as savings. This results in a sum of 75,000 RWF saved at the end of the contract. At the time of our interview, 189 former combatants had been employed by this programme since 2000. The former combatants worked in this project together with non-combatants, which facilitates social reintegration.

Projects of this kind clearly need to be supported and expanded. They combine an economic activity with social integration in an urban environment. The programme also allows the participants to save some money and learn the basics of income management.

Ex-FAR versus RPF

A member of the ex-FAR explained that the amount of 150,000 RWF received by the FAR soldiers seemed to him a 'charity' compared to the 300,000 RWF 'reward' received by members of the RPF. We did not hear this kind of remark often during our interviews.¹³ This is not surprising given the traditional reserve of Rwandans during conversations. We did not observe a general feeling of frustration of FAR soldiers towards FPR soldiers. Most ex-FAR soldiers consider the FPR soldiers as being in the same situation as themselves, albeit from a different army. They understood each other because they had both experienced combat. The divide seems more to exist between former combatants and civilians and not so much among combatants. Many FAR soldiers (approx. 15,000) have joined the FPR (now integrated in the RPA) and thus remained in the military several years after 1994.

Young versus old

UNICEF takes care of a project for child soldiers. The children in this project are under 18 years of age and are given shelter, food and schooling. This is a fine project, but the

young adults in the age between 18 and 25 should also be a special concern. Many persons in this group were in the refugee camps, in the jungle and on the run from 1994 till 1998, some even longer. During those years, they were between 12 and 18 years old and thus experienced war, hunger, killing and rape during a time when a young person should learn to control himself, to have respect for others, to get schooling or training, to develop friendship relations with others, to trust other people, and so on. These young adults did not have the chance to experience these good things in life. During an interview with an 19 year old 'Abagenzi' (a member of the rebel group that attacked northern Rwanda in 1997–1998), the former rebel or child soldier behaved very nervously, turned himself around on his chair several times, refused to address the researcher, spoke with very short sentences and clearly wanted to leave the room as soon as possible. He had clearly no experience of handling a somewhat formal situation. Persons like the young man are handicapped when applying for a job, as they do not have the skills to behave in a formal or professional situation, in this case an interview situation. By the same token, however, this situation could be a classroom or an interview with a potential employer.

In effect, child soldiers (defined as younger than 18 years) are taken care of by UNICEF. Older soldiers are often able to return to their farms. They received some training before they became soldiers and were socialised (aged 12 to 18 years) as young men during peacetime. In contrast to men between 18 and 25 years of age in 2002, the older combatants can at least remember how to behave as a man in peacetime; the young adults have no such experience. Without social and psychological stability, an individual will not be able to develop a productive and meaningful life. Therefore, we strongly advise that these social and psychological needs of young former combatants be addressed. This can be financed from the 2nd component of the MDRP (special programmes).

Income and social status of ex-combatants in comparison to farmers

In another study, we analysed the condition of the rural population in two Rwandan provinces.¹⁴ This allows us to compare the social and economic situation of ex-combatants, who often became farmers again, with their previous situation in the army in which they served and with other groups in society.

Table 2 suggests that a soldier who served in the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR)

received a monthly salary of 5,000 to 6,000 Rwandan Francs during the civil war (1990–1994). This was the equivalent of some US\$75 in 1990 and US\$50 in 1993 (after two devaluations). In 1991, the average rural household in Rwanda had a monthly income (including subsistence) of 4,500 RWF (US\$60), of which some 40 per cent was monetary income (1,800 RWF, US\$24).¹⁵ This means that, before 1994, the monthly salary of one soldier in the FAR was somewhat higher than the gross income of the average rural household. The key difference between these incomes was of course, that the soldier's salary was paid every month in cash, whereas on average 60 per cent of household's income consisted of subsistence crops and fluctuated with the volume and the quality of the harvest, and with market prices.

In 2002, (the time of our field work on the rural economy), a soldier earned 23,000 to 25,000 RWF per month in the Rwandan Patriotic Army, worth some US\$50. From survey work undertaken by the Enquête Intégrale des Conditions de Vie (EICV), we know that the average rural household in 2000 had a monthly income of some 20,000 RWF (US\$45) and the average urban household had an income of 50,000 RWF (US\$110). Again, the salary earned by one soldier is a somewhat higher than the average monthly income of a rural household. The income from farming is lower than a soldier's salary, because the former is a household income, meaning the result of the agricultural work of all the members of the household.

Thus, a soldier, whether he was a member of the FAR before 1994 or a member of the RPA after 1994, earned enough to cater for a whole household living in a rural area. Upon demobilisation, as shown in Table 2, many, if not most of these soldiers become farmers again. In terms of income level and income security, the soldier and his household are worse off after demobilisation when the former soldier takes up farming as his main economic activity. We immediately remark that the household with the demobilised soldier not necessarily becomes a poor household. This of course depends on the land, the cattle, the crop output and the market prices. However, a number of families with demobilised members may fall into poverty.

This of course, highlights the importance of the sum that is paid to the combatants upon demobilisation. Most of our interviewees, especially those residing in the rural areas want to buy a cow with the money received. Young demobilised combatants living in urban areas want to pay for education. It is clear that these are strategies to remain out of poverty. Throughout our interviews with Rwandan government officials and members of the donor community, we have found very little attention for these

strategies. Thus, although the safeguarding and improvement of their living conditions and, of course, their social position in the society is essential for the ex-combatants, administrators of the demobilisation programme pay scant attention to this.

As Kees Kingma, Project Leader at the Bonn International Center for Conversion already observed in other countries, it is important to know where and how the demobilised soldiers spend their money (Kingma, 2000, p.37). Spending by ex-soldiers can have an inflationary pressure on the prices of the goods they buy. In the Rwandan case, extra pressure can be anticipated on the demand for cattle and education.

For former combatants who were not just soldiers, but also corporals, sergeants or even officers, a return to or a start of a farming activity implies downward social mobility. They try everything to avoid this. While in the army, they were individually earning the equivalent of US\$100 or more a month. On their farm, they would have to work much harder to earn a household income equivalent of US\$45 dollar per month on average. This explains why many former combatants prefer to stay in Kigali or in another urban centre: they want to find a job that earns them more than the income they would be able to get from farming. Table 2 shows that five out of seven former RPF combatants in our sample are not engaged in farming but in another, more lucrative, economic activity such as trading. Two ex-FAR who were later integrated into the RPF, after demobilisation engaged in fishing and construction, not in farming. Seven out of 15 of the other ex-FAR personnel who were never integrated in the RPF, returned to (or started) farming. Three ex-FAR were doing casual labour, an activity that is considered less rewarding than farming.

One of our interviewees, a driver (*chauffeur*) used to be a sergeant major in the FAR. He had a monthly salary of some 24,000 RWF in 1990 (the equivalent of some US\$300 dollar in 1990 and US\$200 dollar in 1994). As a driver, he now earns 42,000 RWF per month, which is the equivalent of some US\$100. This is three times less than in 1990 and half of what he earned after the devaluation in 1993. It is approximately equal to the average urban household income and he is able to survive on this salary. In terms of social status however, this is serious downward social mobility. Questioned on this issue, the interviewee, who was clearly an intelligent person, said that

It is very normal for me that the winning army takes the entire cake, that is the way it goes in Africa, and I am happy that I received my demobilisation

instalment, but I do not understand why the new leadership does not make use of my skills.

In a study on the income of rural households (Berlage *et al.*, 2003), we have already observed that access to off-farm jobs (an umbrella term for all sorts of jobs outside farming) is unequally distributed among the Rwandan population. Land endowments, age, gender and social position determine whether a person is engaged in farming or not, lowly paid casual labour or highly paid work such as business or government work. It is here that we touch upon Rwanda's key challenge, not only in regard to former combatants but also of society as a whole. *How to avoid becoming a dual society with one group making rapid social and economic promotion whereas other groups experience downward social and economic mobility, not only in relation to the first group, but even in regard to their position in society before 1994.* When the upward mobile group is identified with an ethnic affiliation, the disenfranchised group may consider revolt as an option. Nkuranziza considers the bloody Burundian conflict a clear example of a regionally and ethnically based elite, who holds state power for the promotion of its own interests.¹⁶

The Rwandan demobilisation program can be a test for this. If it could avoid the slippery path of dual and unequal demobilisation, it could become a model for other governmental programs and even a model for the institutional development of an equitable post-genocide or post-conflict society.

Key problems of the Demobilisation Program in Rwanda

Administrative problems

A sizeable number of our interviewees complain about the high costs of obtaining a bank account. In order to receive the demobilisation instalments, former combatants should hold a bank account. Banks usually charge 5,000 to 7,000 RWF registration costs. Holding a bank account is also a precondition to obtain a loan.¹⁷

A number of ex-FAR have already been waiting five years for the payment of their instalment. They have rendered their weapon in 1997 or 1998 and have not received any assistance since then. One interviewee told us

I am living on my hill since 1997, but I am not demobilised.

This elderly ex-FAR soldier does not mean that he still holds onto a weapon, but that

he, at the time of the interview, had not yet received his money. This problem was neglected by the government, or rationalized away. The researchers were told that it was merely a problem of registration.

Jobs in private security firms

The private security sector in Kigali is flourishing and many former combatants find employment in this sector as they have the appropriate physical skills. The increase in private security forces is not unique to Rwanda (Kingma, 2000). From the perspective of employment, this phenomenon can be applauded. The director of one of the security companies told one of the authors that former combatants learn how to communicate with visitors and be polite. While service orientated skills may be useful in the search for new employment, observers remarks that security sector jobs, together with Local Defence Forces, function as a *stock* of former military personnel that can be recruited in the army at short notice.

Training

For a brief period, selected ex-combatants were able to get a training (construction, textile, mechanic, ...) in a technical training centre in Butare during a six month course. In 1999 the school was closed down. Some 860 former combatants received training there. The officials of the demobilisation program deplore the closing down of this school. We were not able to find the reason for its closing. Depending on the source consulted, two versions were given. The first version says that the World Bank closed the centre because it was not privately run, whereas the second source says that the Ministry of Defence took over the school to train new recruits. Given the need for training and improvement of skills of the former combatants, this closing is indeed deplorable. Donor officials, however, told us that the equipment of the school was very poor and that they did not consider the closedown a great loss. The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) is considering building a new training centre in Butare.

No official was able to tell us whether the demobilised soldiers who received training in Butare were able to find a job later on or not. This lack of interest in and follow-up of the fate of former soldiers is a weak spot in the demobilisation programme. With the operational database, which the demobilisation authority currently has, such follow-up would be easy to implement.¹⁸ However, as with other statistical and registration instruments in Rwanda, databases are very rarely used as follow-up instru-

ments in order to inform and improve policy, but mainly for administration and control. The military and demobilisation authorities keep record of the members of each of the armies, but they do not use these records beyond mere administration.

Education and social mobility

There are other issues in the area of education. One of the most controversial topics in post-genocide Rwanda is the payment of school fees ('minerval'). This fee has to be paid to the school for each pupil. In primary school, it varies from 600 RWF per pupil per year in rural areas, up to 75,000 RWF in Kigali. Secondary school in Kigali, where most former combatants reside, is more expensive, school fees varying from 30,000 RWF to 160,000 RWF per year. Remarkably, the latter amount almost equals the demobilisation instalment paid to ex-FAR soldiers. The fee for a year at the university is 360,000 RWF. The issue was that in the 1995–2000 period, the school fees for children who survived the genocide (children of murdered Tutsi fathers) were paid by the government and donor sponsored Fund for Genocide Survivors. The rationale here is that these children very often have no family members anymore who can support them. Children from other vulnerable households received support from the Ministry of Local Affairs. Parents who were still alive had to pay the school fees for their children themselves.

During interviews, former combatants of the FAR complained that they are not able to pay the school fees for their children, especially not at the secondary school level. It is the same problem as the one articulated above when discussing access to well-paid jobs and social mobility in Rwanda. Access to education forms the basis for both jobs and mobility. The fact that many interviewees brought up the cost of education, without any question on the side of the researchers in this regard, points to the importance of this topic in the lives of the former combatants. Access to schooling, jobs and social mobility are key issues in post-genocide Rwanda. This problem is not only pressing for the children of former combatants, but for many combatants themselves, especially for those young people whose schooling ended in 1994 and who joined the ex-FAR or Interahamwe in the Congo. Readers familiar with Rwandan history will not be surprised by these observations, as education policy was also a very controversial topic under Habyarimana. Social mobility through education is a key issue in many societies (e.g. P. Bourdieu, *La Distinction*, 1980).

Conclusions and recommendations

In this paper, we highlighted some of the difficulties of reintegration of former Rwandan combatants in economic life. From our analysis, it follows that donors should verify that the follow-up survey of ex-combatants—planned in April 2003—effectively took place. Such a survey, when properly conducted could shed more light on the findings that we presented in this study. Implementing the planned survey would also signal active interest in programme implementation from the government. Given the level of donor support for the MDRP, donors should put more effort in monitoring progress of the programme and not leave everything to the World Bank. In particular, since the World Bank concentrates on technical issues, donors should step in to do a political follow up of the demobilisation programme. Donors should also make sure the Demobilisation Programme pays adequate attention to the real concerns of the former combatants, being their income level and their social status in post-genocide society. Supporting programmes that create employment opportunities for both former combatants and non-combatants is, therefore, a good idea.

Our work also shows that the Rwandan government can and should do a better job than it is actually doing. The government should treat former combatants as much as possible as ordinary Rwandans. They do not want to be considered as a special category that needs to be controlled. They want to go on with their lives and need government support in order to do so. The government should not (only) regard demobilisation as a military or administrative process. The government should use available data in the Demobilisation Office to support former combatants in their daily lives, to follow up the result of training and to follow up the use made of the demobilisation payments. Finally, the cohort of ex-FAR soldiers in the ages between 18 and 25 years (in 2002) has experienced the war in the Congo at a crucial age (12 to 18 years old). They should receive special attention in the reintegration programme allowing them to acquire social and professional skills.

Endnotes

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2. Berlage, Verpoorten and Verwimp, 2003.
3. We refer to Kingma, K., 2000; Hendrikson, 1999 A Review of Security-Sector Reform, Working Paper, The Conflict, Security and Development Group at the Centre for Defence Studies, King's College, University of London, 1999. This paper serves as reference for the introduction of the present study.

4. United Nations, (2002, 2003) several reports on the Exploitation of Congo's Mineral Wealth.
5. Ngaruko and Nkuriziza, 2000.
6. Uvin, P., 2001.
7. This is not unique to Rwanda. Ayalew and Dercon (2000) report how the Ethiopian authorities have data on the characteristics of demobilised soldiers but this data is not available for public use.
8. The special programmes for targeted groups concern vulnerable ex-combatants. The RDRP has designed the following vulnerability criteria: having no land, having no livestock, having no fixed assets, having no employment and having no productive capacity. In monetary terms, a vulnerable ex-combatant is someone whose household has less than US\$0.4 per person per day. This threshold corresponds with the earnings of an average rural family with four household members. If one earns less than the average, or has more than four household members, one is likely to fall below the threshold.
9. UNDP, 2001, p. 22.
10. For details on the different stages of the programme, see the World Bank report of the supervisory mission of the MDRP, December 2002.
11. The first stage was supervised by the UNDP. Under the MDRP, the UNDP was replaced by the World Bank. We believe institutional knowledge could get lost in this way. The World Bank acts as a manager of the Trust Fund set up to finance the demobilisation and reintegration programme and does not contribute funds itself.
12. We saw several of these cards and noticed that former FAR soldiers had 'EF' in front of their number, combatants caught in 1998 during the fighting in northern Rwanda, so-called Abagenzi, had 'MN' in front of their number and former FPR soldiers did not have any letters typed in front of their number. A number of soldiers we interviewed did not like this way of identifying themselves with the army in which they had served. They just want to be considered as ordinary Rwandans.
13. According to officials in the demobilisation commission, this difference does not exist anymore in the ongoing programme.
14. Berlage, Verpoorten and Verwimp, 2003.
15. Verwimp, Ph., 2003.
16. Nkuroga and Nukurunziza, 2000.
17. The loan, to finance a purchase or to make an investment amounts to four times one's monthly salary. It has to be repaid in 12 down payments during the next year.
18. A November 2002 Mission Report on Demobilisation in Rwanda mentions that Technical Secretariat (in charge of programme management) would regularly track the provisions of assistance to the ex-combatants

and would conduct a survey of three per cent of the beneficiaries in April 2003 to carry out physical verification of the extended benefits and report results. At the time of writing of this report, we have not seen an outcome of this process.

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