

PEACE AT A PRICE: NIGERIA'S PRESIDENTIAL AMNESTY PLAN

By Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard

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This photo from March 26, 2015, shows Goodluck Jonathan, left, and opposition candidate Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, right, before the last presidential elections. (Source: AP Photo/Ben Curtis, file.)

Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard is a Research Staff Member in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses. Her new book, [Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa: Causes and Consequences](#), is out now.

MILITARY INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

By Alexander Noyes

The difficult task of integrating former rebel and government forces into a single military command after civil war is a regular component of international peace building worldwide. Indeed, since the 1990s, military integration programs have increasingly been included in negotiated settlements to civil wars. Over [50 percent](#) of civil wars that ended in negotiated settlements in the 2000 to 2006 period formally included such initiatives. What is the track record of military integration programs in Africa's post-civil war states? And what conditions contribute to success or failure? [more...](#)

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Chad	1992-1996 (Phase I) 1996-1997 (Phase II) 1999 Reintegration (Post program)	27,179	27,179	Discontinued	12
South Africa	2005-2010	9,000	Never implemented	Never implemented	10
Rwanda	1999-2001 (Phase I) 2001-2008 (Phase II)	22,000	7,881	4,758	50
Sierra Leone	1998-2000 (Phase I) 1999-2000 (Phase II) 2002-2004 (Phase III)	84,200	71,043	54,000	45
Ethiopia	2000-2003	148,000	148,000	148,000	174
Uganda	2000-	50,000	26,288	5,335	8
Guinea-Bissau	2001-2006	12,595	12,129	4,261	13
Angola	2002	3,120	Delayed	Delayed	Unavailable
Angola	2002-2008	165,000	92,390	92,297	246
Somalia	2003-2007	53,000	1,500	505	3
Liberia	2003-2008	103,019	101,495	59,831	110
Côte d'Ivoire	2003-2007 (Phase I) 2007-2010 (Phase II)	40,000	17,001	0	40
Central African Rep.	2011-	100,000	Yet to commence	Yet to commence	Unavailable
Burundi	2004-2007	7,565	2,556	2,556	13
Burundi	2006-	19,100	6,431	Yet to commence	Unavailable
DRC	2004-2010	35,000	26,283	21,012	84
Rep. of Congo	2004-2010	240,000	159,419	72,239	275
Niger	2005-2008	30,000	Unavailable	15,179	25
Sudan (Darfur)	2006-2007	3,160	3,160	3,160	2
South Sudan	2006-	4,700	5,363	303	Unavailable
South Sudan	2009-2011 (Phase I) 2012-2017 (Phase II)	150,000	12,523	8,307	165
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Sources: These figures are based on various estimates from multiple United Nations and World Bank documents, commissioned studies, and news reports. Some residual DDR activities continue in countries where past programs have formally ended. Civilian disarmament campaigns in Uganda, South Sudan, Kenya, and elsewhere were omitted because they contain no demobilization or reintegration components.

Source: Table taken from Prosper Nzekani Zena, "The Lessons and Limits of DDR in Africa," *Africa Security Brief* 24 (January 2013), 4, http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/AfricaBriefFinal_24.pdf.

About IDA

The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation operating in the public interest.

IDA's three federally-funded research and development centers provide objective analyses of national security issues and related national challenges, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise.

IDA's Africa team focuses on issues related to political, economic, and social stability and security on the continent.

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Conflict in the Niger Delta

The distribution of Nigeria's oil wealth, concentrated in several southern states collectively referred to as the Niger Delta, has long caused the country problems. Specifically, there has been tension between the region's belief that it should be the primary beneficiary of revenue from its oil reserves and the federal government's centralized management and redistribution of oil revenue across all the country's states.

In the 1990s and 2000s, groups in the Niger Delta sporadically protested the government's handling of its oil resources. For example, the [Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People \(MOSOP\)](#), the Ijaw Youth Council, the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the [Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta \(MEND\)](#), and the Egbesu Boys all claimed that despite the region's oil wealth and its contribution to the central government's coffers, the region remained underdeveloped, enjoyed too little of the revenue from oil sales, and experienced significant environmental hardships associated with oil production because oil spills were frequently occurring. These groups demanded either more autonomy or a greater share of oil revenue.

Beginning in 2006, militant groups engaged in a series of escalating attacks against oil installations in the region, many of which were owned by multinational corporations. These attacks took the form of kidnappings and ransoming of oil workers and theft ("bunkering") of oil. From 2006 to 2009, attacks increased, intensifying to the point that oil production in the country dropped to an all-time low. It was estimated at the height of the attacks that the government was losing more than [100,000 barrels of oil per day](#) and spending [approximately \\$19 million](#) per day on counterinsurgency operations.

Yar'Adua's Presidential Amnesty Plan

President Yar'Adua's approach to the crisis in the Niger Delta was [two-pronged](#): a military offensive that began in May 2009 and a disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) amnesty program. The Presidential Amnesty Program (PAP) is a voluntary program in which militants, during an initial 60-day amnesty period in late 2009, traded in weapons for educational and/or vocational training and a monthly stipend. PAP was envisioned as a five-year program to run from 2010 through 2015, although there was an assumption that it was likely to be [renewed](#) at least once. Since 2010, the program has provided scholarships, vocational training, and skills-acquisition programs, as well as a monthly stipend (approximately \$300 to \$400) to [30,000 participants](#). At the time of the program's unveiling, however, [some were concerned](#) that the program was a temporary measure that did not address the underlying drivers of underdevelopment and conflict in the region. Some called it merely a scheme for "[buying relative peace](#)" in exchange for access to oil. In addition to the formal amnesty program, [some ex-leaders](#) of rebel movements received lucrative contracts to provide pipeline security and larger-than-average stipends.

PAP and Buhari

The PAP was one of many campaign issues in the 2015 presidential election. Former rebel groups from the Niger Delta were split in their support for the presidential candidates in the 2015 election, but [many supported incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan](#). For example, the NDPVF threw its support [behind Jonathan](#), a southerner from Bayelsa State in the Niger Delta, based on the belief that he would protect the region and potentially the program. On the other hand, MEND, the largest militant group active during the mid-2000s conflict, [supported Buhari](#). The group's leadership alleged that corruption under the Jonathan regime had cost the country – and the Niger Delta in particular – far too much and that Buhari was better suited to lead the country.

The responses to Buhari's April victory were, predictably, split. MEND leadership expressed its hearty [congratulations](#), but ex-militant Mujahid Asari Dokubu, leader of the NDPVF, [threatened a resumption of conflict](#). Other groups have issued [similar warnings](#) of violence in the event the government does not adequately address the needs of the Niger Delta.

Several ex-militants staged a protest on December 14 in response to the government's proposed 2016 budget. They claim that the amount allocated for the amnesty program amounts to a [significant reduction](#) and will not support the program through 2016. Protesters claim that if the amnesty program ends in 2015, they will go to war. The government has been sending [mixed messages](#) regarding the status of the program, suggesting that it has not yet decided how to proceed. Several state governments [recently reported lapses in payments](#), but the federal government has said that this was an [oversight](#) and not the beginning of the end of the program.

Conclusion

While it is encouraging that MEND has distanced itself from other ex-rebel groups and remains in support of the Buhari government, the threat of a resumption of violence in the Niger Delta remains very real. The Presidential Amnesty Program, while expensive, has not yet produced the kind of results needed to engender meaningful development in the Niger Delta. [Only 151](#) of the program's 15,451 graduates have thus far found permanent employment. Part of the problem may be related to the misuse of program funds. The program's former head, Kingsley Kuku, and eight other contractors and consultants [have been arrested](#) and charged with misappropriating funds.

Regardless of the source of the program's lack of sustainable progress, the government will soon be forced to decide how it will deal with the situation in the Niger Delta. It cannot afford another conflict, but it may also not be able to afford continued peace. Whatever measures are taken next should emphasize long-term, inclusive development.

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Military Integration in Africa

Military integration efforts after civil wars have been widespread in Africa, often as part of security sector reform or disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs. By one count, [22 African countries](#) (see chart) have embarked on DDR programs since 1990. Military integration programs have been initiated in countries ranging from Sierra Leone and Liberia in West Africa to Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in Central and East Africa to Mozambique and South Africa in Southern Africa. Such programs have featured varying degrees of international involvement, although international actors, principally the United Nations, have provided some level of support in most cases.

Surprising Success?

Two recent academic studies on the topic of military integration help shed light on the dynamics and outcomes of military integration processes in Africa. In a 2014 [volume](#) that he edited, political scientist Roy Licklider argued that despite some notable failures, the track record of post-civil-war military integration programs in Africa is surprisingly good. Eight of the 11 case studies in the volume are located on the continent (Sudan, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, South Africa, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, DRC, and Burundi). Of these, only the DRC stands out as a total failure. As Licklider optimistically argues, "perhaps the most counterintuitive conclusion to be drawn from these studies is that it is in fact possible under a variety of circumstances to integrate personnel from competing military groups after civil wars ... the overall record is quite positive."

Interestingly, the Licklider volume finds that traditional military capabilities and effectiveness have little impact on whether militaries were able to [successfully integrate](#): "the military capabilities of the new forces were often irrelevant to their successes." On the capability of military integration to prevent renewed conflict, Licklider strikes a more modest tone,

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asserting that military integration alone is not a cure-all. He notes that “no contributor to this project believes that military integration by itself will make renewed civil war impossible.”

Conditions for Successful Integration

Other scholars echo this sentiment. Reflecting on her 2015 research on military integration in Africa, political scientist Nina Wilén [argues](#) it “is highly improbable that military integration alone can produce a stable peace.” Her 2015 [study](#), published in *International Peacekeeping*, analyzed the conditions that foster successful military integration in Africa, with a focus on Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda. She found that four factors shaped successful military integration outcomes: political education (aimed at forging a national identity), welfare provision (guaranteeing the basic needs of soldiers), socialization (often forged through intense training or deployments), and professionalization (military ethos). She also found that cohesive international and domestic support were important to success. Based on these considerations, Wilén deemed Rwanda and Burundi’s military integration programs as relative successes but, in agreement with the Licklider volume, viewed the DRC’s experience as a failure.

Wilén added two important caveats to her findings on Burundi and Rwanda. On Burundi, she noted that current tensions within the security forces stemming from President Pierre Nkurunziza’s controversial election to a [third](#) term in July 2015 threaten to reverse progress on military integration. Recent troubling events in Burundi, including [growing](#) tensions in the army, underscore this point and demonstrate that military integration is no panacea. On Rwanda, Wilén [noted](#) that a strong, integrated military does not mean that a country’s security forces will be used in accordance with democratic practices: “In terms of effects on the peacebuilding process, military integration may have a positive and stabilizing effect on a post-war society if the government adopts a democratic relationship to the army.” If, however, an authoritarian government creates “a strong, integrated army that can be used as a tool against opponents, the result could be disastrous.” Licklider also makes a similar point regarding the case of Zimbabwe in the 1980s.

Conclusion

Although the above research suggests that military integration programs are unlikely to single-handedly prevent renewed conflict, both studies suggest that such efforts can help countries emerging from civil conflict on a number of fronts that contribute to post-war stability. Given current conflict trends, the international community will continue to play a crucial role in military integration programs in Africa. International actors would therefore be wise to heed the lessons from Rwanda and Zimbabwe and strive to promote democratic civil-military relations as a key component of military integration programs.

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