

Referendum outcome will not affect disarmament, demobilization and reintegration program in South Sudan: VP Machar

By Julius N. Uma

November 17, 2010 (JUBA) - Implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program in Sudan will continue regardless of the outcome of next year's referendum on southern independence according to Riek Machar Teny the region's Vice President.



Dr. Sulafeldeen Mohamed Saleh, Commissioner General of NSDDRC (left), H.E. Lt. Gen. Riek Machar Teny, Vice President of GoSS (center); and Chairperson of the SSDDRC William Deng Deng (right) at the conference, November 15, 2010 (Photo: Johanna Luarila)

Machar the second most powerful politician in the south said the region, made the remarks while officially opening a two-day DDR review conference held in Juba, the Southern capital.

The conference, which was organized by the [Southern Sudan DDR Commission \(SSDDRC\)](#) aimed to inform the public and allow key stakeholders to hold collaborative discussions on the challenges for the future of the DDR in the semi-autonomous region.

The DDR program is an integral part of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the National Congress Party.

Since the deal the SPLA has become one of the official armies of Sudan.

In the south the program has been planned and implemented in association with the SPLA, government ministries and commissions, national civil organizations, [UN Mission in Sudan \(UNMIS\)](#), [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#), [United Nations Children Fund](#) and funding partners. Among its targets are children and women who are soldiers or associated with armed groups.

According to Machar, the current DDR program will have to undergo another process, regardless of the final outcome of the January referendum on the self-determination of southern Sudan.

“If it is unity, we will have to create Sudan national armed forces from the current three armies, JIUs [Joint Integrated Units], SPLA and SAF [Sudan Armed Forces]. There are also paramilitary units such as the Popular Defense Forces, particularly in the north. This is going to be a big challenge,” Machar said.

He further added that, “If the outcome is secession, then the north will have to deal with the problem of how to implement DDR in the south, the JIUs, popular defense forces and any other paramilitary units. In the same way, the south will have to deal with the SPLA, JIUs and any other units like the police, and wildlife. All these forces will be affected by a review of the DDR program.”



Birthday cake served for the 1-day-old SSDDRRC website. Anna Kima Hoth, Deputy Chairperson (left) and William Deng Deng, Chairperson of SSDDRRC, November 16, 2010 (Photo: Johanna Laurila)

Lise Grande, the Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Southern Sudan said there is a gap between demobilizing and reintegrating former soldiers in to society. She said remains a serious risk to the program.

“There have been several incidences where staffs working on the DDR program have been threatened, for example in Rumbek. There have also been increasing cases of community violence resulting from incidences of demobilizing soldiers. I know that the SPLA and the Government of Southern Sudan are doing a lot to improve the situation but security guarantee for those working on the DDR program should be a priority”, Grande said.

According to William Deng Deng, SSDDRC Chairperson, the current system of providing vocational, and other training, after demobilization should be replaced with a new approach by which training activities take place for a minimum of six months, while the soldiers are still with their military units.

“During this period, the soldiers would continue to draw their military salary, allowing them to focus on the training without worry about feeding their families,” Deng said.

As part of the program, he said, plans are underway to establish community-based reintegration projects, which will be coordinated closely with the Government of Southern Sudan ministries in partnership with the bureau for community security and arms control.

The two-day review conference, which brought together various members of the diplomatic community, alongside representatives from both the north and south DDR Commissions, and South Sudan DDR state coordinators was based on the theme, “DDR in Southern Sudan: Lessons learned and challenges ahead of the referendum.”

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